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T.R.B. from Washington

Worry Lines

★ Let's write a mood piece. First, the weather. It's lovely. Elms with a haze of brown. Maples with little bombs of green. Birds sing, daffodils nod, skies fickle. Soon, the cherry blossom parade, then – Martin Luther King's poverty march on Washington (April 29).

Next, social life. Example, two dinner parties. At the first we spent the whole time snarling. Natural enough – two drinks and all liberals. LBJ supporters (Administration veterans, the New Deal, Old Guard) stressed his social reform. (Angry cries: Vietnam!") Also, one Kennedy Supporter. (Angry cries, "Opportunist!") Lastly, the McCarthyites, drooling for the Wisconsin primary like lovers for a tryst. (Angry critics: "You can't elect *him!* Don't you know ADA's own scorecard rates him 62 percent; RFK 100 percent!") . . . And so, not gentle, into that good night. Washington hostesses begin to show worry lines.

Dinner party No. 2, amazingly different. This a Cliff Dweller crowd. "Nixon's the *one man:* He puts civil *obedience* before civil *rights!*" "Ike says it approaches *treason!*" Every trail leads back to THE subject: Martin Luther King. The poor – ? "They don't work for $2 an hour!" Riots ahead: talk of guns, rapes, burglaries; how to bar windows, lock doors; what arms do you carry after dark? "Have you heard about MACE? – yes, it *blinds* the man, temporarily, you know; like tear gas." . . . "Ah, but how about *Instant Banana Peel* for controlling crowds. You haven't heard? – chemical liquid, spread on streets, ha, ha, everybody falls down!" And so on, into the night. . . . When, before, have so many feared and hated one another?

Now the campaign: We recall nothing like it. Everything's ahead of schedule. Here it's only April and they're already using August insults – Tricky Dick and Hanoi Bobby and near treason. When has there been anything like this: Romney drops out; McCarthy wins NH; Bobby instantly plunges; Rockefeller is in . . . no, he's out; Vietnam casualties pass Korea's; White House leaks to *Time* and *Newsweek* bizarre story that Kennedy tried to bargain to stop the war, Kennedy instantly denies it; gold crisis; Joe Alsop says, "no seriously informed person in Saigon denies that the Tet offensive was a play from weakness"; Robert Shaplen *(The New Yorker)* denies it; LBJ moves to ease Westmoreland upstairs; Nixon prepares to tell how he will enlist Soviet Union "on the side of peace." It can't keep up this pace; it does.

Pop Corn

★ So now we go to hear Lyndon Johnson address the AFL-CIO construction workers. Let's draw breath; let's slow down. We haven't heard the President for some time. What's he like? It's this big hotel auditorium, holding 4,000. The crowd has been worked up for an hour to the proper pitch. It's a big, prosperous, Rotarian-type labor leader crowd. They hail George Meany, a short, burly man, who ridicules other presidential candidates and virtually identifies the Vietnam war with Holy Church. The commies, he says, made their sneak, surprise offensive in Tet, which in Asia is the Fourth, Easter, and Christmas "all rolled into one." They cheered him.

Mr. Johnson comes out and holds the crowd in his hand for the next 15 minutes. I try to see him as though I were a foreigner and had never seen him before. He is tall, self-confident, a man with big ears, and the narrow eyes of a plainsman squinting into the sunset from under a flappy hat, obviously a past master in crowd stirring. He pours it on but keeps his dignity; he shows rugged strength. He has the crowd shouting. As he talks about health benefits and better pay and education he stirs latent idealism; he makes them think of old days – storming the Pinkertons at Homestead, organizing the auto workers at Ford's. There is a ring of sincerity in his voice. "Give 'em hell!" somebody shouts and everyone laughs.

Then he comes to the war and gives them the patriotic bit. "We would be a threatened nation if we let freedom and liberty die in Vietnam," he says. Without any perceptible transition he is in a corny spot, his voice drops to a tremolo as he talks about the humble Average American who "does not ask for much" (the hell he doesn't), all he asks for is a roof over his head, some clothes for his "nekkid body," a decent school for his children, a church to worship in, and a little recreation now and then – "maybe taking Molly and the babies in the car for a ride on Sunday afternoon."

It is pure corn. They love it. He makes all these well-heeled, middle-class men feel patronizing and kindly. They are dewey-eyed.

Oddly enough he uses a familiar phrase at one point, "Give me your help!" Haven't we heard that before? Our conclusion: this is a formidable man. Don't underestimate him. But for the war, nothing could beat him.

Several things make the election unusual: the rising power of the polls (they knocked out Romney and Rocky); the presence of a third party that would throw the election into the House as it stands today by the latest Gallup: Nixon 41 percent, Johnson 39 percent, Wallace 14 percent; the desperate palace revolt against a sitting President; but above all the torment of the American soul that hates the war and hates the means to end it. It threatens national schizophrenia.

One final afterthought to send you out to enjoy the lovely spring. From the sky now, Robert Shaplen reports, you can see "the countless trenches at Khesanh that the North Vietnamese are building, some of which run almost to the edge of the airstrip." Nobody knows how safe that beleaguered static force of 5,000 Americans is. But suppose the worst; suppose for a minute that they are threatened with slaughter. Can anybody doubt that an American government (or any government) would use the tactical nuclear bomb if it had to save 5,000 of the young men from having their throats cut? Many people think that nuclear weapons are "too terrible" ever to be used again. Do you imagine so? Well, take a look at Khesanh.

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Tail-Tucking

Some weeks ago *Life* invited the State Department to come up with any additions it had to offer to the public record of the "search for peace" in Vietnam. Here was a chance to show in a mass magazine that there was substance behind Secretary Rusk's frequent hints that the Administration performance would look different and better, if only the full story or something near it could be told without compromising the Department's secret channels of communication with Hanoi. The channels – Canadian diplomats, the Soviet, Polish and other governments with access to Hanoi, NLF and Hanoi representatives in Rangoon, Paris, Moscow – were not all that secret. Mr. Rusk had announced that the latest communication through them had come to nothing. The widespread impression that the Administration has done less than it could to encourage negotiations has contributed to mounting and, in a campaign year, politically menacing disillusion with the war. It was clearly to the Administration's advantage to put its best foot forward in the March 22 *Life* and it did, with interesting results.

William P. Bundy, the assistant secretary most concerned with Vietnam, supplied the *Life* writer, Frank McCulloch, with off-record background and a huge stack of departmental papers, including a massive chronology of the whole business since 1963. Other officials helped. And to what end? Only to demonstrate that the Administration has nothing whatever to offer by way of improving or altering the sad story already known. A few anecdotal tidbits add nothing to the substantive account. The few possibly promising modifications of hard positions came from Hanoi and the NLF, rarely from Washington, and the same old tale of intensified American bombing just when Hanoi was pondering some feeler or extending one of its own emerges from the recital. McCulloch, a first-rate journalist with years of experience in Vietnam, indicates here and there a healthy doubt that his sources had come entirely clean with him. There is no indication that it would have made much difference if they had. Obligated though it is for Administration favor in putting its story together, *Life* concludes from the proffered evidence that, in Washington, no less than in "implacable" Hanoi, "there is no will to compromise." It is a fair conclusion.

And yet, on March 18, we were again told by Mr. Johnson that "there is no one among you who desires peace more than your own President and your own Vice President." How irrelevant that claim

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is. For what is in dispute is not the President's desire for peace, but the terms on which he is willing to settle. His asking price for an end to the fighting has been, and is, capitulation by Hanoi and victory for "our" Vietnamese, a price higher than Hanoi will pay.

Why is that the President's price? Long after the White Papers have been published, the dossiers of official statements assembled, labeled and filed, what will remain for historians to ponder, and what may prove the most revealing clue to why this fruitless war has gone on so long, are the driving impulses of Lyndon Johnson himself. They are not the impulses of a prudent lawyer or even a canny politician; they are more primitive, more romantic. He sees himself as Colonel James Bowie at the Alamo, Lincoln standing firm for the Union, Churchill defying the Nazi beasts, FDR demanding quarantine of the aggressors, Truman holding the line against communism in Europe. Vietnam, in this high drama, is imagined as the fulcrum on which the fate of freedom turns. He is proudly confident that the American system is "first in the world," by which he means the most powerful, but that it "cannot be first if we pull out and tuck our tail." So we carry on the battle, irrespective of the consequences, thus certifying our manhood. This is not courage but conceit that invites a bloody nose. "When I was a young man in grade school," the President recalled at a recent White House dinner, "one of the things I memorized was a phrase to the effect that one of the most beautiful visions in the world was the flag of my country in a foreign land." The young man grew up, the Stars and Stripes were raised in Hue, and the vision became a nightmare.

Take Your Pick

"We are cutting through a century of neglect . . . and we are not going to be stopped."

– LYNDON JOHNSON, *March 25*

"We must tighten our belts, we must adopt an austere program." – THE PRESIDENT, *March 16*

"We will do what must be done – we will do it both at home and we will do it wherever our brave men are called upon to stand." – THE PRESIDENT, *March 26*

"Some desirable programs of lesser priority and urgency are going to have to be deferred."

– THE PRESIDENT, *March 16*

"He said he felt we could have another war like Vietnam over there and we could handle all of the domestic programs in this country, and at the same time we did both of these things – if we had the will and the determination – we would handle the problems of the less fortunate people all over the world." – SENATOR STUART SYMINGTON *(D, Mo.) paraphrasing the unpublished Senate testimony of former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, March 25*

"I would amend this [McNamara] statement by saying: 'If we are willing to reduce our standard of living.' We are a great and powerful country and we can do a lot. . . . If we are willing to get down to the subsistence level like the Russians or someone else, perhaps we could accomplish all these things that Secretary McNamara indicated." – JOSEPH W. BARR, *Under Secretary of Treasury, March 26*

Free World Note

Dictator of Portugal for 41 years, Dr. Salazar last month got rid of another leading political opponent. His council of ministers banished without time limit Dr. Mario Soares, a well-known Lisbon lawyer, to the hot and humid African isle of Sao Tome in the Gulf of Guinea. Soares was the family lawyer of Salazar's other late political antagonist, General Humberto Delgado, who was murdered in Spain in 1965.

Soares' arrest on March 20 was his thirteenth. He had been released on March 1, without charges being preferred, after 2½ months in detention. He was rearrested in his Lisbon office. Dr. Soares, who is 43, has shown marked courage defending political prisoners of the regime. For years he has been under constant police surveillance. After his release on March 1, he was not allowed to leave Portugal, even to go to Madeira to recuperate.

Portugal is a one-party state, with secret police (PIDE) and an SS-type organization (*Legiao Portuguesa*). Soares' offenses in the eyes of the regime are that he opposes this fascist set-up inside Portugal. He also opposes the colonial war in Africa (Guinea, Angola, Mozambique), that is costing Portugal about $200 million a year, or almost two-thirds of the total defense budget, and that ties down 120,000 regular Portuguese troops. Additionally, Soares and 235 other intellectuals signed a document demanding abolition of the rigid and unconstitutional censorship of the press.

Salazar's usual method of dealing with political foes is to jail them over and over again, but only for a few months at a time. The government can then say truthfully that at any one time there are only a few hundred political prisoners. Two other men arrested with Soares are Urbano Tavares Rodrigues and Sousa Tavares. The latter is a lawyer, the former a well-known writer and member of the Portuguese Writers Association that the regime banned last year; it dared award a literary

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prize to Luandino Vieira, an Angolan author who is in a government concentration camp. Sousa Tavares is a Christian Democrat.

Last year, when Soares was allowed out of Portugal briefly, he met leading European politicians including Pietro Nenni of Italy, and the Swedish prime minister, Tage Erlander. He was interviewed on television in Scandinavia and in England. His criticisms of the Portuguese secret police and of Salazar, and especially his insistence that General Delgado was murdered by the PIDE, probably account for his re-arrest.

Prisons and Politics

While Governor Nelson Rockefeller was painfully discovering how much Republican leaders love Nixon, Governor Winthrop Rockefeller was bruising his shins over a prison scandal in Arkansas. The ruckus began in late January when workmen, acting at the direction of Cummins prison superintendent Thomas O. Murton, discovered three skeltons in a field on the sprawling prison farm. Why the skeletons were there has never been established. There was reason to believe they were the remains of prisoners quietly done away with in years past. There was also reason to believe other victims of old-fashioned penology are lying in the same field. Superintendent Murton, one of Winthrop Rockefeller's key appointees when he took office last year as the first Republican governor in 94 years, called in the press and announced plans to "keep digging." He expected the full backing of the administration.

Murton had proved to be far and away the best prison superintendent Arkansas has ever had. The state's system, consisting of two prison farms, has been one of the sorriest in the nation, replete with case histories of brutality and misuse of convict labor. The prime piece of brutality was for years the so-called Tucker telephone, a device that transmitted electric shocks to a prisoner's genitals. In his brief tenure, Murton had instituted a rapid-fire series of changes, ranging from abolition of the strap as a form of punishment to dismantling the electric chair to instituting a policy of candid reports to press and public. The dean of the University of California school of criminology said Murton had "performed a miracle" with his early reforms; Rockefeller and his prison board constantly praised him.

Then the prison's skeleton story broke, and in the manner of Russians downgrading Stalin, Murton was suddenly being castigated by his former friends and superiors. Rockefeller, after a period of indecision, ordered the digging stopped, though Murton was turning up what were in effect Democratic skeletons. Everybody in that field had been laid there under Democratic rule. But Rockefeller either couldn't or wouldn't draw the obvious political conclusion: to play the skeleton scandal for all it was worth, telling Arkansas that this was what Democratic rule had done.

Instead, and incredibly, Rockefeller had the prison board fire Murton. Insiders noted apologetically that the superintendent was a hard man to get along with, a man who had rankled the governor a number of times. Rockefeller had little to say about the firing except to complain that, "we keep getting bad publicity. I would rather be reading about Arkansas getting a new industry." So would everyone else, including Thomas Murton. But the fact was that Murton, Rockefeller's own man, had turned up the makings of a huge scandal and got fired for it.

The weird echoes go on and on. Not only was Murton fired, he was pilloried by the Democratic-controlled legislature (whose members praised the state's "model prison system") and threatened with prosecution for disturbing those peaceful prison graves. *The New York Times* disclosed last week that the state police had completed a report with enough in it, said one official, "to put several people in the electric chair." The report has not been made public and may never be. The governor said he was not "terribly excited" by it. He is concerned about the "good" name of the state – and the Democrats with whom he must work. Luckily for him, the Democrats are in such disarray that even this blunder does not measurably help their chances of recapturing the governorship this fall.

Classified 2-S

Oberlin, Ohio

Last December the eight Ivy League college presidents wrung an assurance from the White House that draft boards will not be used to "repress unpopular views" or to judge the legality of anti-draft protests. But that only tended to slow down Selective Service Director Lewis B. Hershey's attempts to jiggle draft policies to punish anti-draft demonstrators. What stopped him here was an adroit move by Oberlin College President Robert K. Carr. The 60-year-old former Dartmouth political scientist found his opportunity when the Forest Park, Ill., draft board declared Oberlin student John Dove delinquent because he participated in an anti-draft protest.

The board notified Dove on Jan. 30: "You by your own admission consciously and illegally interfered with military recruitment at Oberlin College, thereby violating the Military Selective Service Act of 1967, and that by taking such action you attempted to influence and counsel others to avoid or evade military

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service." When the word reached Carr, a chain reaction was set off, climaxed by the indignant president's announcement that all military recruiters would be banned from the Oberlin campus until the government assured him that it would keep its hands off Dove.

The Forest Park draft board was obeying a Hershey dictum of Oct. 26, 1967, sent as a memo to the nation's 4,088 draft boards. It said, in part: ". . . any action that violates the Military Selective Service Act or the regulations, or the related processes, cannot be in the national interest. It follows that those who violate them should be denied deferment in the national interest. It also follows that the illegal activity which interferes with recruiting or causes refusal of duty in the military or naval forces could not by any stretch of the imagination be construed as being in the support of the national interest."

Then, on November 9, Justice Department lawyers indicated that it would be contrary to law to induct anyone as a penalty for interfering with draft procedures or recruiting. A month later Hershey joined Attorney General Ramsey Clark in issuing a disclaimer to the effect that the draft was not to be used to punish lawful protest against the draft. Nevertheless, when Dove went to his Forest Park draft board on December 22 to check on a student deferment (he was still 1-A because he had failed to contact the board directly to confirm his student status), Hershey's statement came up. The board told him it got information about demonstrations from any source, including the FBI. "I replied that as an act of conscience I had demonstrated against the war, and made a formal statement to that effect," Dove recalls.

That was that – until the delinquency notice arrived.

Although there have been at least 30 cases in which students have gotten into trouble with draft boards for burning draft cards or sitting-in at draft boards, Dove was the first to draw a reprisal for an on-campus demonstration. President Carr says the demonstrators undoubtedly violated a "whole raft of laws" last October. "But when that happens, somebody has to decide to prosecute and the students are entitled to due process of law," he adds. "This has nothing to do with the operation of Selective Service."

Carr wrote what he describes as a "calm, restrained, forceful letter" to Hershey to protest the Dove notice. He received a telephone call from one of the director's deputies who assured him that the delinquency notice would be withdrawn. With pledge in hand, Carr took the issue to the Oberlin faculty, which voted 130-0 to support sanctions against the recruiters until the Dove case was cleared up. Carr demanded written assurance from the draft board; he got it. And Dove got his reclassification. He is now 2-S.

ROBERT GILES *and* ABE ZAIDAN

Our Uncivil Servants

I play it the company way.
Executive policy is by me OK.
How can you get anywhere?
Junior, have no fear.
Whoever the company fires,
I will still be here.

– How to Succeed in Business
Without Really Trying.

The good grey people of Washington – the civil servants – are not renowned for the courage of their convictions. They enter the civil service, in many cases, for job security and the tacit promise that once hired, never fired. But there are sacred rites that must be performed in tribute to Tenure. They must not become "controversial." Most of the 2.7 million federal civil service employees are unorganized, ununionized, unideological. Until 1964 the thousands of them who live and work in Washington, D. C., were not even enfranchised. The Hatch Act, while confirming certain rights, effectively prevents their active participation in partisan politics.

But these are not ordinary times, and a few days ago, the civil servants spoke out against the President and the war. More than 1,400 of 285,000 federal employees in Washington signed petitions which read: "From our position we have seen how the purpose and energy of government are drained by preoccupation with the making of war. We have seen how progress in foreign policy has been obstructed. We have seen how massive national resources are absorbed by a disastrous war while critical domestic needs are inadequately met. And seeing this, we fear the political and moral consequences for the future of our country.

"All this, together with the tragic and unnecessary suffering of the Vietnamese people, has troubled our conscience and now compels us to speak out to colleagues and fellow citizens.

"We call then for the war's end. . . ."

The men who have organized the protest announced they would publish the signers' names in newspaper ads April 1, even though the House Un-American Activities Committee had begun a staff investigation of the petition and its signers. The President, Chairman John Macy of Civil Service, agency heads throughout the government, and Congress are reportedly disturbed by their action. Chairman Edwin Willis (D, La.) of HUAC has whipped out a bill that would amend the Subversive Activities Control Act to permit firing of government employees who oppose US foreign policy "in time of actual war." Any two government employees who get together and print a statement

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that might "advantage" our foreign enemies, or impair the morale or loyalty of federal workers who have a foreign policy function, or our troops, would be committing an illegal act.

There are already a number of intra-agency regulations of doubtful legality proscribing the rights of government workers to speak, write and act, despite Hatch Act protection of an employee's "right to vote as he chooses and to express his opinion on political candidates and subjects." At the State Department – a particularly unlikely place for peaceniks – a heated controversy is in progress among the legal adviser's staff. Memos are shot from desk to desk. Jared G. Carter, a special assistant, circulated a memorandum March 15 acknowledging the existence of the petition and expressing his opinion that Department regulations "prohibit signing." He cited regulations banning membership in private foreign policy organizations (as distinct, but not very distinct, from professional societies) and forbidding the association of one's name with publications adversely affecting that great catch-all, the public interest. Also he had found a phrase banning without permission personal writings whose publication "may reasonably be expected to affect the foreign relations of the United States." All such things must be cleared first. But Carter's was not the last word. On March 19 another member of the legal adviser's staff of equal rank issued his own memo, calling Carter's advice "imprudent." "It was dubious," he thought, "whether the regulations were applicable to individual conduct by individual employees signing the petition and that, in the event the regulations were so applicable, serious constitutional problems were in issue." His final words sounded like a threat! "I believe that this office should anticipate the probability that any name, directive, or advice we issue on this problem will be subject to a thorough airing in the press. . . . I think it would behoove us to examine and resolve very carefully the constitutional and other issues that are involved."

One of the petition organizers, who asked that his name not be mentioned, said he has talked to scores of sympathetic persons for every one who will sign. At the Agency for International Development, which is semi-independent of the State Department, some 50 employees wrote to the Administrator, William S. Gaud, quoting the petition, announcing their agreement with it, and asking for assurances that AID regulations do not preclude signing, or, if formal permission is necessary, asking that permission. AID asked the group to keep its interest in the petition quiet or else risk, in the heat of publicity, an adverse decision. Their discretion went unrewarded. On March 26, Gaud called them to his office and explained that it would not be in the national interest for 50 persons intimately involved in the country's foreign policy to publicly denounce the war. Internal State Department regulations, he said, were prepotent over the Hatch Act and the First Amendment. The AID people could not sign without jeopardizing their careers. (About 20 of them then began to consider having blanks appear on the final printed petition to represent names of employees who were told they couldn't sign.) Before they left Gaud, someone asked if he thought it would be permissible for AID employees individually to write letters to the press. Did regulations forbid that too? Gaud said he didn't know; he would check with the lawyers.

David Sanford

Johnson's Dienbienphu?

Khesanh – A Goat Tied to a Stake

> *Q: Why is Khesanh worth holding?*
> *A:* . . . It sits astride north-south and east-west routes into the northern provinces. . . . If they could use the routes which come through Khesanh, then they would have a dry route year round . . . depending upon where the monsoon was. It's a severe disadvantage to them for us to hold Khesanh. I think that is the material advantage. Of course, there is also the psychological aspect of the thing, as it is now built up." – *AP interview, March 25 with* Gen. Leonard F. Chapman Jr., *Commandant of the Marine Corps.*

Khesanh is being defended for reasons that are not worth the life of a single Marine, and the decision to stand there could easily end in a military disaster unprecedented in the Vietnam war. The generals, rationalizing that decision, assert that Khesanh anchors down the western end of a defensive "line" across the northern part of South Vietnam, that the Khesanh garrison is blocking a large-scale movement of North Vietnamese forces into the south, and that abandonment of Khesanh would enable the enemy to "turn our flank."

Those explanations tell us only that the generals are living in a strategic dreamworld. The "line" is in no sense a barrier. Strategically, there are no "flanks" in the kind of war being waged. And the Khesanh Marines, far from being in a position to block North Vietnamese military movements, venture out past their protective wire only at great risk. At Khesanh, 5,000 men are huddled together on a flat, isolated plateau

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surrounded by 20,000 North Vietnamese looking down from high ground. The Khesanh garrison is like a goat tied to a stake.

The North Vietnamese, evidently under the direct command of Dienbienphu victor Vo Nguyen Giap, undertook to construct a major strategic trap when it became clear that the faltering South Vietnamese Army was no longer able to protect the government-held cities and towns. Giap began by conducting a series of moves which drew substantial American forces out of the heavily populated areas into battle on terrain most favorable to the North Vietnamese – the mountainous, jungle-covered interior. Khesanh, a lightly fortified base camp for operations aimed at interdicting North Vietnamese movements into South Vietnam, was transformed into a defensive position of considerable weakness as North Vietnamese strength in the region began to overshadow that of the US.

Giap recognized that weakness while our military leaders were impelled not to. In Giap's military lexicon, like that of Mao Tse-tung, real estate as such has no value; an army should avoid battle where the advantages lie with the enemy, and retreat in the face of superior force is a mark of good sense rather than cowardice. For American commanders, on the other hand, it is necessary to preserve the appearance, for the sake of the home audience, that the communist enemy is being defeated. Our forces have withdrawn, after the battle was over, from dozens of hilltops seized; but withdrawal in the face of the enemy is considered a demonstration of weakness and an admission that the strategic situation might not measure up to the image painted by Administration publicists.

The American propensity to subordinate military to symbolic considerations is a great mistake and the North Vietnamese have exploited that mistake fully. They might have undertaken to overrun Khesanh with a quick thrust while it was still very lightly defended. Instead they increased the pressure gradually, drawing our generals into a firm commitment to make a stand there. While Giap thus diverted the attentions of Westmoreland and his staff, the Viet Cong caught the US command off guard with their Tet offensive. That offensive, launched simultaneously against cities and towns throughout South Vietnam, required the dispersal of defensive forces and fulfilled several objectives: (1) it wrecked the pacification program; (2) it drove American as well as South Vietnamese forces back into defense of the cities and towns; and (3) it carried the war to the urban areas – where American and South Vietnamese efforts to evict the Viet Cong, relying heavily on firepower, contributed greatly to the damage inflicted upon what remained of the Saigon regime's political base.

The Viet Cong assault on urban centers, in turn, strengthened Giap's hand at Khesanh. The US military command can no longer concentrate its forces to disrupt the enemy buildup at Khesanh without risking the loss of various cities and towns; that would completely deflate the public relations balloon (asserting that the enemy suffered a bloody nose and that the initiative will quickly be regained) sent up by the Johnson Administration after the Tet offensive, adding to the already unpleasant American domestic political consequences caused by that offensive. Indeed, the Administration risks exposure of the fact that its Vietnam strategy is bankrupt.

When skeptics point to alarming similarities between Khesanh and Dienbienphu, the American generals point to various differences which, they say, will prove decisive. Those include greater artillery strength than the French had at Dienbienphu, vastly superior airpower, mobile reserves, and Marine supporting positions at Camp Carroll (17 miles away) and a hill known as "The Rockpile." Until an assault on Khesanh actually materializes, it is easier for the generals and for President Johnson to face the future in the belief that these remedies will suffice than it is to face the certainty of substantial casualties and considerable embarrassment now if the decision is made to withdraw from Khesanh.

We do indeed have airpower vastly superior to that of the French before us; but that superiority has not produced better results, overall, in the fighting. The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong have worked out effective means for protecting themselves against our airpower and for conducting military operations in the face of it. In the Khesanh situation, comparative *weight* of firepower cannot be equated with relative effectiveness. The North Vietnamese positions around Khesanh are very well hidden and dispersed, and Giap's forces have no doubt dug deeply into the ground. The Marine positions, on the other hand, are concentrated in a relatively small, completely barren area, and can be pinpointed exactly. Ammunition and fuel dumps are exposed, overhead protection for most bunkers is poor, and supply – with the single road out already cut – is tenuous at best.

If Dienbienphu can be taken as a precedent, the North Vietnamese will keep a powerful array of artillery and anti-aircraft weaponry completely under wraps until just before an assault on Khesanh. In the face of heavy firepower, it will be almost impossible to land reinforcements on the Khesanh airstrip, evacuate the wounded, and supply the defenders. American fighter-bombers, slowing down to fire or to drop their loads, will be vulnerable to ground fire. Neither the B-52s nor the 175 mm guns at Camp Carroll will be much help against enemy troops, debouching from trenches and tunnels right in front of Marine lines.

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Nor will it be easy to extricate the Khesanh garrison. Camp Carroll and "The Rockpile" are not heavily fortified and can be brought under attack themselves. The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong have many times in the past ambushed relief columns from carefully prepared positions; Giap will undoubtedly be as diligent in his preparations to waylay relief forces as he is for an assault on Khesanh itself.

Khesanh offers the North Vietnamese a combination of excellent military opportunities. They can undertake to destroy the garrison there, or employ Khesanh to lure relief forces into combat on carefully prepared terrain, or exert pressure at Khesanh to draw forces away from the urban centers. Nor must they stay there if the going becomes too heavy. The initiative, in any case, lies with Giap. One can assume that his troops aren't tunneling up to the Marine lines just for exercise.

The Khesanh defenders may indeed be able to withstand everything the North Vietnamese can throw at them. But the cost is likely to be high in the event of a major attack, and the risk of Khesanh being overrun is great. There is, moreover, no strategic point in being at Khesanh. Its Marine defenders are being asked to face death primarily to save their military and political leaders from embarrassment. In 1947 an American General, David Barr, advised Chiang Kai-shek to withdraw his isolated garrisons from Manchuria while the getting out was still good. Chiang, shocked by the idea, waited until it was too late.

Military realities inevitably catch up with those who ignore them. The realities of South Vietnam call for the courage to make sensible military decisions, even if they are criticized by those who believe that our troops should fight wherever they happen to find themselves. Those realities also call for military retrenchment in South Vietnam, where we are strategically overextended, and for a scaling down of Washington's objectives.

Oliver E. Clubb Jr.

Mr. Clubb *is the author of* The United States and the Sino-Soviet Bloc in Southeast Asia.

Americans, Not Arabs Worry Israelis

Tel Aviv

The scores of special correspondents who rushed to Israel when the fighting resumed on the Jordan River were bitterly disappointed. "The one day war" was exactly that, and most of them have already departed for more exciting places. Sooner or later, however, they will all be back; there will be more of these one-, perhaps two- or even three-day wars.

"What many people here and abroad don't realize," one of Israel's top policy planners told me, "is that since last June Israel has been the dominant power in the region, and we have to behave as such. We will not react to every shot fired at our soldiers or to every mine exploding under an Israeli vehicle. But when we do react, it won't be to punish the raiders. We will strike in force to prevent further sabotage. We may not stop the enemy altogether. But his policy of irregular war will become more and more costly."

The brief outburst of fighting has illuminated the true picture in the Middle East. Some 15,000 Iraqi troops, a division, were stationed on Jordanian soil, only 20 or 30 miles from where Israeli paratroopers and tanks had struck nine months ago. Those Iraqi troops have been the sponsors of terrorist operations against Israel. A Palestine regiment that is attached to them is paid, trained and sent across the Jordan River. Yet when the fighting broke out, the Iraqis made no move to rescue the hard-pressed *El Fatah* terrorists or Jordanian troops, though the Iraqis enjoyed tremendous numerical superiority over the Israeli invading force and should have been able to wipe it out. It must be remembered that the avowed purpose of the Iraqi presence in Jordan (Iraq did not accept the cease-fire order of the Security Council last June, a luxury it could afford since it has no common frontier with Israel) is to protect "Arab soil against new Zionist aggressions." Egypt and Syria likewise did nothing to help the Jordanians, though Cairo and Damascus too had pledged "full assistance to the sister-nation." A few weeks earlier Gamal Nasser had asserted that his army, thanks to Soviet weapons and training instructors, was now stronger than it was last June. Perhaps. But in the 24-hour war, the Arabs again gave proof of their military weakness.

We know that none of the Arab governments is yet willing to negotiate with Israel, so as to change the present state of no-peace and of infrequent, very short wars. Jordan and the UAR recently rejected a proposal by the Special UN Representative, Gunnar Jarring, to send plenipotentiaries to Cyprus for discussions, under his chairmanship, with the Israelis. Syria never wanted to have anything to do with Jarring. We are told that no Arab government, including that of Nasser, still by far the dominating personality on the Arab scene, feels strong enough to challenge a public opinion that is violently hostile to any deal with the despised "hereditary enemy." It is instructive, however, that in recent student and worker demonstrations in Cairo, it was not Israel that was denounced. The demonstrators attacked their own cor-

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rupt regime. It is quite possible that Nasser feels he cannot make peace with Israel, thus legalizing Egyptian territorial and other losses. And King Hussein can afford it even less; it is hard to imagine what concessions Israel would be willing to make for agreement with a ruler who obviously does not control his country nor even his armed forces. And so, unable to wage war, unwilling, and possibly also unable, to make peace, the Arab countries are back on the course they have been following with a notable lack of success for 20 years: harass Israel with small-scale terrorist activities.

Outsiders may think of the areas conquered by Israel as akin to Vietnam, where bombs and ambushes are daily routine, and where the Israeli hold is shaky. Mines do explode, shots are fired, but not very often in Jericho or Nablus or the Old City of Jerusalem or in Gaza. Nothing so annoys the Israelis as a vague suggestion by foreigners that their country is some kind of a "second Vietnam." Fortunately for them, they say, the Arabs are not North Vietnamese, nor are the Israelis South Vietnamese. A more basic difference, as the Israelis see it, is that while the Americans have no business in Vietnam and while the security of the US would be greater if they were not there, the Israelis had no choice: if they wanted to stay alive in Tel Aviv, Haifa and West Jerusalem, they had to conquer East Jerusalem, Jenin and Hebron. Now they have no alternative but to stay there. And it looks as if they will, for quite a long time.

The Israelis have no fear of what the Arab countries may do. They are apprehensive, however, at constant statements from Moscow to the effect that the status quo is unacceptable. As long as the US is willing to guarantee the Middle East against outright Soviet intervention, the Israelis don't think they're running too great a risk. But almost everyone wonders what would happen if the US were to lose out in Vietnam. Would it not drastically reduce its foreign commitments? Would it still keep the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean and guard its other interests in the Middle East? The Americans have never lost a foreign war. If they do . . . ?

Meanwhile, the best way I can describe the Israeli mood at this moment is to quote a Tel Aviv housewife: "We work in order to win a war every 10 years, and each victory gives us another 10 years."

PHILIP BEN

Why I'm for Space Exploration

by Louis J. Halle

There has been life on earth for over 2,000 million years now, and man himself goes back at least a million. Yet it is less than a dozen years since this life, developing and proliferating for so long, has at last emerged from our planet's atmospheric envelope into outer space. A scholar of a million years hence, wherever in the universe he is, may well regard the middle of our century as the turning point in the career of earthly life and, specifically, of our own species. I am, therefore, puzzled to find a marked lack of enthusiasm among my acquaintances at the prospect of man's liberation from this earthly prison.

What is the explanation?

There are those who want the resources now allocated to the exploration of space to be used for the support of more immediate and mundane causes. It is hard to argue with them except to the extent that there are grounds for doubting that what was saved on the space programs would in fact become available to feed, say, the hungry of India. (Since the vast governmental spending that goes with a war economy has proved to be an essential element in our economic prosperity, a more practical proposal might be that we should reduce the occasions for war spending and allocate what was saved to space exploration.) My impression, however, is that many are moved by a spiritual horror, deep-seated but unacknowledged, at the notion of even looking beyond our familiar planet, let alone leaving it. Traditional religious beliefs are threatened by any vivid recognition of how small our planet is in a cosmos of thousands of millions of galaxies, each with thousands of millions of suns, many of which must have planets like ours, the whole spread over distances that a beam of light, traveling at 186,000 miles per second, would take several thousand million years to traverse. For some there is simply the child's fear of leaving, even in imagination, what is after all home – be it ever so humble. But I

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myself do not feel as attached as they do to this increasingly cluttered and polluted planet. I regard it as too small, and its prospects as a habitable environment for the long future worry me. Sometimes, when I have horrors of what may be, I find relief as Logan Pearsall Smith did when the world was too much with him: "I . . . think of Space, and the unimportance in its unmeasured vastness of our toy solar system; I lose myself in speculations on Eternity, reflecting how, at the best, human life on this minute and perishable planet is but a mock episode, as brief as a dream."

However, my enthusiasm for man's historic emergence into space has a more solid foundation. I suffer from intellectual claustrophobia. I feel like Chuang-tzu's frog in a well, denied knowledge of the great world outside.

To change the figure, imagine some creature of lively intelligence confined to the lowest depths of the oceans, where the light of the sun never penetrates. Although it combined the curiosity of a Socrates with the mind of an Einstein, its confinement to an environment so limited would exclude it from the possibility of gaining the least notion of the real universe to which it belonged. It could not know as we know that there is more to that universe than salt water and a darkness relieved, at best, by phosphorescent gleams. It could not know that miles above there was sunlight and air, mountains tipped with snow, days alternating with starry nights. It could not know that the ocean was, together with land, merely the surface of one among countless spheres errant in space. From the remains of organic decay that sank to its level it might hypothecate the existence of life far above, as we have in the past drawn conclusions from the cosmic rays that penetrate our atmosphere to reach us. Still, the ontological speculations of even the most brilliantly endowed philosophical mind, confined to such an environment, would be fruitless and absurd. Any logical order that it formulated to explain being would be so pitiful in the limitations of its scope that such creatures as ourselves, relatively godlike by virtue of our larger world, might properly be moved to tears or laughter.

Imagine this submarine species, now, beginning to make technological progress that enables it to explore ever higher reaches of its environment in craft that maintain the pressure of its native deeps. Eventually it rises to the surface of the sea and begins the discovery of a world that it could not even have begun to imagine in the confines from which it has at last been released. Surely we men are in that position. Until recently we thought our earth constituted virtually the whole of the cosmos, of which it was the center. In the last 300 years, however, we have begun the discovery of a universe that earlier hominoids had not even imagined. Of course this process has been upsetting of traditional convictions. We can no longer believe that God sits "up there" in the sky, as the deep-sea philosopher might find he could no longer believe in a God who dwells in eternal darkness, breathing salt water, after he had seen what a universe there was above the surface of the sea. But loss of the certainty that goes with ignorance is the price that must be paid for progress toward whatever the ultimate truth may be. The loss of darkness is the price of light. If we had not been willing to pay this price in the past we might still be offering human sacrifices to this or that Baal.

Now that we know there must be millions of millions of other planets like ours circling other suns in the far realms of space, it has at last become implausible that we men are the only self-consciously intelligent creatures in the cosmos. Think what possibilities this alone implies as we extend our knowledge into these realms!

It is true that Einstein's theory of relativity sets bounds to such converse as we might otherwise have with our kind elsewhere in space. Since a message cannot travel faster than the speed of light, it would take 10 years to get one (by radio) to our nearest neighbor among the stars, and we would have to wait a minimum of 20 for the reply. We could not expect an answer from the nearest galaxy in less than four million years.

Relativity appears to set the same limit to the speed with which any spaceship could travel out from the earth. If it could attain the speed of light, a stay-at-home observer watching it through a telescope would see it disappear at that point – for the greater its speed (relative to him) the less its apparent volume, which would reach zero when it reached the speed of light. (As an object approaches the speed of light its volume approaches zero, its mass approaches infinity, and its constantly retarded time approaches the stopping point.) Therefore, it, too, limited to the speed of light, would take millions of years to the nearest galaxy.

What is fundamental to relativity, however, is that the speed of light is constant from the point of view of any observer, whatever his state of motion relative to other objects in the universe. To an observer on earth, a spaceship traveling away from it at 93,000 miles per second would be traveling at 50 percent of the speed of light; but to the occupant of the spaceship it would be motionless relative to the light. It would be traveling at 0 percent of the speed of the light, which would be streaming past it at 186,000 mps, and what

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the passenger would see was the earth moving away from himself and his motionless ship at 93,000 mps. As the speed with which earth and spaceship receded from each other approached that of light, the spaceship would approach the point of disappearance in the view of the observer on earth, but it would be the earth that was approaching the point of disappearance in the view of the passenger in the spaceship, who would experience no reduction in his own volume at all.

From his own point of view, the passenger in the spaceship, no matter how fast he appears to be going to the observer on earth, can always fire a propelling rocket and thereby increase his speed – and even when he has done so he will still find himself traveling at 0 percent of the speed of light, so that he has come no closer to any limit on how much faster he can go. Long after he has reached the speed of light and disappeared, from the point of view of the observer on earth, he can still go faster.

Here, however, I am leaving out a possible problem, that of accelerating the spaceship; because, if it has attained such a high velocity relative to the entire universe of stars that the stellar masses are moving past it at a speed approaching that of light, any further acceleration might produce gravitational effects that would reduce its volume toward the vanishing point – or such acceleration would prove virtually impossible because, as the ship's volume approached zero, its mass (which resists acceleration) would approach infinity. Concurrently, however, time would be slowing down toward the stopping point for the passenger, who would be aging so slowly as to approach immortality. The millions of years it might take him to reach the galaxy according to the clock of an observer on earth might, then, be only days or weeks according to his own clock.

The disputation of the scientists shows that all these matters are still uncertain, from which it follows that we don't really know that the first space-traveler we sent out to a neighboring galaxy would not be able to make it well within his lifetime – even though it should take him millions of years by our own calendar.

Relativity has abolished absolute distances and absolute intervals of time. Its only remaining absolute is the constant velocity of light, which sets a limit to communication and, supposedly, to the speed of passenger-travel. But 186,000 miles per second is, itself, not a fixed amount, since the length of a mile and the duration of a second are not fixed. Imagine an observer on earth who sees two spaceships pass each other traveling in opposite directions, each at a speed of 180,000 mps according to his measurements. For him, their speed relative to each other is 360,000 mps, almost twice that of light. But an observer in either ship sees the other passing at less than 186,000 mps, this being the limit of speed at which any object can travel relative to any observer, according to that observer's own measurements. This relativity of speed-limits allows one to believe that, even though we could not send an electromagnetic signal to our nearest neighbor among the galaxies in less than two million years of our earthly time, we might send a messenger in a great deal less of his own time as an individual.

Today, I understand, there would be a problem of finding enough energy on earth to accelerate a spaceship up to the speeds I have been referring to. There are, however, such things as anti-particles and when a particle collides with a corresponding anti-particle all the mass of both is converted into energy at the rate defined by Einstein's formula, $E = mc^2$, where m is the mass and c^2 is the enormous quantity that one gets when one multiplies the speed of light by itself – in other words, a prodigious amount of energy from a minuscule parcel of matter. Apparently the problem of energy for acceleration will be solved, then, if physicists ever learn how to construct anti-matter in quantity.

Life, as we know it within the terms of our earthly prison, makes no ultimate sense that we can discover; but I cannot, myself, escape the conviction that, in terms of a larger knowledge than is accessible to us today, it does make such sense. Our position is simply that of the intelligent creatures confined to the ocean deeps. Now, however, that we are at last beginning to escape from our native confines, there is no telling what light we may find in the larger universe to dissipate the darkness of our minds. There is also the possibility that we may begin to populate new planets as, after 1492, we began to populate a new continent. Suddenly man's future seems boundless.

Of course we don't know what space exploration might lead to, or even whether it can come to anything at all. Would such uncertainty, however, provide a sufficient argument to justify the fish in remaining at the bottom of the ocean, once they had acquired the means to rise above it? I can imagine the debate that might go on in a deep-sea society between the traditionalists and the adventurous, but to me it is clear which side would represent progress and the hope of the future.

"There's heaven above, and night by night
"I look right through its gorgeous roof;
"No suns and moons though e'er so bright
"Avail to stop me; splendor-proof
"I keep the broods of stars aloof;
"For I intend to get to God,
"For 'tis to God I speed so fast. . . ."

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Can We Limit Presidential Power?

by Henry Steele Commager

Under the skillful prodding of Senator Fulbright, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations has recommended for adoption a resolution designed to restrain the authority of the President in the use of armed forces outside the United States. Undersecretary Katzenbach, in turn, has informed the committee that its resolution is irrelevant and futile and that the President will, in effect, recognize no limits on his conduct of foreign relations other than those imposed by his own judgment. Senator Fulbright warns us of an erosion of the congressional power which will, if not arrested, permanently alter the balance of power contrived by the framers of the Constitution; presidential spokesmen reply that the balance has already been shattered, and that nothing can be done now to put it back together again.

It is an old problem, as old as Washington's neutrality proclamation and as recent as Secretary Rusk's refusal to commit the President to consulting the Senate about sending perhaps as many as another 200,000 troops to Vietnam. It is rooted in the ambiguity of the constitutional provision for the Presidency: "The executive power shall be vested in a President," and it has not been clarified by miscellaneous Supreme Court decisions, from *Martin* v *Mott* in 1828 to the Youngstown Steel decision of 1952.

The current crisis has new ingredients, not found in earlier assertions of executive authority by Monroe, Polk, Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson; ingredients which have enormously aggravated the familiar problem of reconciling the imperative of a strong President in the realm of foreign affairs with the constitutional arrangements for separation of powers and limitations on powers. These new ingredients go far to justify the use of terms like "erosion" and "aggrandizement."

First, unlimited executive power in foreign relations and war is no longer justified as emergency, but as normal and almost routine. In raising armies without congressional sanction, in the suspension of the *habeas corpus*, in the emancipation proclamation, Lincoln pushed his powers to the outward limits of what was constitutionally permissible, but he said, with humility, that the emergency required him to do this and that Congress would doubtless give retroactive approval to what he had done. No such humility characterizes what we may call the Johnson-Katzenbach theory of executive authority.

Second, our current presidential commitments are global rather than, as with Lincoln, domestic, or, as with Polk, Cleveland and Wilson, limited to the Western hemisphere and rationalized, or justified, by the Monroe Doctrine.

Third, the new executive commitments are not, as commonly in the past, *ad hoc* and practical, but general and ideological. We do not now take arms because "American blood has been shed on American soil," nor does the President respond to an inescapable emergency such as the attack on Ft. Sumter. Now our President acts to "contain communism," to frustrate an "international conspiracy," to protect something vaguely called "vital interests" in far corners of the globe. Thus Secretary Rusk's notorious assertion of 1966 that "no would-be aggressor should suppose that the absence of a defense treaty, congressional declaration, or US military presence, grants immunity to aggression." The key words are, of course, "absence of treaty" and "congressional declaration."

Fourth, for the first time in our history we are

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members of an international organization which is responsible for preserving the peace and arbitrating dangerous controversies; indeed in a sense it is *our* organization, imagined by Woodrow Wilson, brought into being by Franklin Roosevelt. Yet our formal declarations of what the President is prepared to do throughout the globe (and, it must be confessed, declarations of what the Congress is prepared to support) effectively by-pass the United Nations. There are occasional gestures toward involving the United Nations in the war in Vietnam, but these are indeed gestures rather than genuine efforts. Certainly we did not even pretend to invoke or involve the UN in our original attack on North Vietnam, nor, for that matter, in our adventures in Guatemala, Cuba and Santo Domingo, nor did we even involve the Organization of American States in these ventures until we could confront it with a *fait accompli.* And whatever might have been said for the conduct of a Polk or a Theodore Roosevelt in justification of unilateral action, can no longer be said for the conduct of President Johnson, for we are committed now, as we were not earlier, to procedures established by the UN Charter and by the Organization of American States.

A fifth new ingredient is philosophically as ancient as the precept that power corrupts. It is that the possession of power encourages and even creates conditions which seem to require its use, and that the greater and more conclusive the power the stronger the argument for its use. Those who possess authority want to exercise it: children, teachers, bosses, bureaucrats, even soldiers and statesmen. Just the other day General Mark Clark, speaking with exquisite appropriateness at a memorial service for a leading Catholic churchman, argued that if the going got tough in Vietnam we should not hesitate to use "tactical" nuclear weapons. Men who possess power think it a shame to let power go to waste and sometimes, perhaps unconsciously, they manufacture situations in which it must be used – as in Santo Domingo, for example. All this was dangerous but not intolerable in the pre-atomic age; it is no longer tolerable.

The problem of the unauthorized use of the executive power in situations that might result in war is complicated by the obsolescence of old and conventional terminology. Thus the once traditional argument that, in his capacity of Commander-in-Chief, the President is authorized to take "defensive" but not "offensive" action has little meaning today, for now all military action is defensive. Even Hitler claimed that his assault on Poland was "defensive." That we ourselves are not backward is clear from the wording of the Tonkin Gulf resolution that "the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President to repel armed attack . . . and to prevent further aggression." You could not hope to have a clearer statement of the purely defensive nature of this war than that, nor a more alarming picture of the aggression which President Johnson is now heroically resisting!

So, too, with the once fairly simple notion of what is national territory or what are territorial waters. It was Franklin Roosevelt, after all, who said that the American frontier was on the Rhine, and Roosevelt, too, who officially extended American territorial waters 300 miles off the Atlantic coast. What would our government say, today, if China should adopt the Roosevelt principle that her territorial waters extended 300 miles out from her coast, and if she should issue a "shoot at sight" order to Chinese ships?

Or there is the relatively new concept of "vital interests" – a concept with no standing in international law and no understanding even in politics. When in 1957 Congress authorized President Eisenhower to protect the "vital interests" of the United States in the Middle East, the President in effect repudiated that particular justification, and dispatched 14,000 American soldiers to Lebanon "to protect American lives and property." But "vital interest" has now become the official rationale of our presence in Vietnam. What that vital interest is, or what our interest in Vietnam is vital to, remains opaque.

It is not only concepts like "defensive" and "offensive" warfare, or "vital interests" or "territorial waters" that are outmoded; Undersecretary Katzenbach has now formally asserted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that declarations of war are equally outmoded, thus neatly repealing a clause in the Constitution without the bother of congressional and state action. The Tonkin Gulf resolution – which senators now say they did not understand – together with the SEATO treaty, which no one understands, constitute, said Mr. Katzenbach, the "functional equivalent to a declaration of war."

The argument for latitude in the exercise of presidential power draws great strength from a recognition that in a nuclear age emergencies may require instantaneous action. Four times in the past seven years Presidents have mounted major military interventions without congressional authority, on the plea of emergency: the Bay of Pigs, the missile crisis, Santo Domingo, and Vietnam. Only one of these – the missile crisis – could claim to be a genuine emergency, and, in a larger sense, even this was an emergency of our own making, for it is arguable that the whole Cuban muddle was a product of our miscalculations about Batista and Castro. If the Bay of Pigs situation and the Santo Domingo election dispute represented emergencies so imperative that there was no time to con-

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sult Congress, then anything whatsoever can be twisted into an emergency and the traditional requirement of consultation with the Congress is a thing of the past.

Can anything, then, be done to protect the use but avoid the misuse of presidential powers?

Not, it must be confessed, very much.

There are, of course, obvious and official solutions. The Senate might repeal the Tonkin Gulf resolution; the House might cut off appropriations; Congress might impeach the President. (When Senator Fulbright merely listed this as one of the constitutional safeguards, he was resoundingly rebuked by Senator Lausche who apparently thought the Constitution un-American!)

None of these remedies is available. The Senate is quite as belligerent as the President; the House has never yet refused appropriations to conduct a war; no President has been impeached. Furthermore, if the Congress did try to restrain the President in the conduct of war he could as Commander-in-Chief still commit troops – as indeed President Johnson has in both Vietnam and Santo Domingo – or he could act in secrecy, as President Kennedy did at the time of the missile crisis, and present the nation with a *fait accompli*. Furthermore, public opinion almost always supports the President against Congress, and is against anything that can be called "retreat" or "surrender." Even if public opinion should turn against President Johnson, there is little chance of any change of policy, for has he not himself said that if his support (in the polls!) should drop to one percent he would still persist in his program?

Can the Fulbright resolution do what other constitutional and political restrictions have failed to do?

"It is the sense of the Senate," so reads the resolution, "that a national commitment by the United States to a foreign power, necessarily and exclusively results from affirmative action taken by the executive and legislative branches of the United States government through means of a treaty, convention or other legislative instrumentality specifically intended to give effect to such commitment."

Admirable as it is, this resolution holds out little hope of effectiveness. If it had been on the statute books at the time of the Tonkin Gulf episode or at the inception of our bombing of North Vietnam, would it have prevented or mitigated these actions? Surely not, for the Administration would have cited – as it does tirelessly – the "obligations" of the SEATO treaty, or it would have invoked the amorphous concept of "vital interest."

Would the resolution have avoided the Cuban missile crisis? No, because action at that time was not alleged to be based on a national "commitment," but on presidential responsibility to defend the United States against attack.

Would it have stayed Eisenhower's intervention in Lebanon or the Pescadores? No, because these had Senate endorsement, after a fashion. Would it have avoided intervention in Guatemala in the early fifties, or the more notorious intervention in Santo Domingo in 1965? Probably not, for intervention in Santo Domingo – like that in Lebanon – was justified on the argument that American lives were in peril, while our Guatemalan adventure was so private that to this day the Congress seems unacquainted with it.

Are there, then, any practical measures that we might devise that would have any likelihood of adoption by the Congress and acceptance by the President – two very different things?

The Senate might give effect to the constitutional provisions for participating in the conduct of foreign affairs by providing that the Foreign Relations Committee, or a quorum of it, should remain permanently in Washington, instructed to consult with the President on any matter of foreign policy thought important.

Would the President in fact consult with the committee? Secretary Rusk's evidence before that committee makes this prospect highly improbable.

An entirely different approach suggests itself only to retreat in confusion: that the United States take seriously its obligations under the United Nations, and invoke, and abide by, decisions of the UN on all controversies in which it is involved. How much easier and safer if our President would hand over to the UN the difficult problems of Guatemala, Santo Domingo, Lebanon, Vietnam, Cuba and now Korea. There is no reason in law, or in logic why this could not happen; the reasons why it does not, and will not, happen are political and psychological.

These proposals, like that of the Fulbright committee, or Professor Carl Kaysen's proposal that no money appropriated by Congress might be used to support soldiers outside the continental United States without prior approval by the Congress, offer little likelihood of effective restraint.

Where then do we turn?

When there is no response to "What is the answer?" it is useful to ask "What is the question?" Perhaps here, as elsewhere, we are asking the wrong question. If there are no solutions to this intransigent problem of the abuse of presidential power we will do well to go back and start over again and reconsider the nature of the problem itself.

If we consider those exercises of presidential power in the past two decades that by-pass the Congress – and perhaps the Constitution; if we contemplate the

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Truman doctrine, the Korean war, the Pescadores crisis, the Laotian imbroglio, participation in the Vietnam war even before 1956, the Lebanon doctrine, intervention in Guatemala, Santo Domingo and Cuba, the missile crisis, the activities of the CIA in some 60 countries, large-scale intervention in Vietnam and Thailand, and the newly erupted quarrel with North Korea – we detect that they have one common denominator. All are inspired by and directed to communist threats, real or imagined. All are skirmishes or battles in the cold war. All are functions of our obsession with communism, and of our notion that we have been chosen by providence to contain communism, everywhere on the globe. Furthermore, almost all of the attitudes and gestures which distinguish the current claims for the outmost reach of the presidential power have, on closer examination, the same common denominator: namely that when a threat of communist conspiracy or communist subversion is implicit or explicit in any situation, no limit can be or will be put on the executive power necessary to dispose of that threat.

If the pattern is clear, so too is its meaning. Until we can rid ourselves of our delusions of universalism and our obsessions with communism, and other ideological threats – which are, in last analysis, the inspiration for our war in Vietnam – we will not and cannot abate presidential abuse of power in foreign affairs.

The misuse of executive power where communism is, or appears to be, involved is not a phenomenon of the Presidency, or of individual Presidents. After all, when we trace a harmonious pattern of the use of the executive power in Franklin Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson we are forced to conclude that what we have is not a manifestation of personal or even official ambition, but something inherent in the Presidency and in the age in which these Presidents serve.

Nor have Presidents been alone, or even idiosyncratic, in their illusions about total power, or in their obsessions with communism. If they were, that would indeed be cause to tremble for the Republic, for then it might be said that the fears of the Founding Fathers about the innate corruption of men in power, were about to be realized. But presidential advisers, from Acheson to Rostow, share these obsessions; congressmen declaim them; a substantial segment of the American people confess them.

The creation of this national paranoia is a responsibility which almost all of us share: political parties and leaders, the press, the church, the school and the Academy. And as most, or all, of these have some responsibility for creating or permitting the situation which now provides the logic for the abuse of presidential power, all share responsibility for reeducating Presidents, congressmen, editors, and the American people about the dangers implicit in the arrogance of power and the danger of ideological obsessions. Until the forces, motives and fears which underlie the exercise and the rationale of excessive presidential power are dissipated, we will not abate that power.

This is a hard job and may be an impossible one. But is it really harder to wean the American people from their obsessions and educate them to the realities of world politics than it is to cut back on presidential powers by constitutional or political means?

Abuse of power by Presidents is a reflection, and perhaps a consequence, of abuse of power by the American people and nation. For almost two decades now we have misused our vast power. We misused our economic power, not least in associating economic with military assistance and military with economic support, and in imposing economic sanctions against nations who did not see eye to eye with us about trade with our "enemies." We misused our political power by trying to force neutrals onto our side in the cold war and by bringing pressure on the nations of Latin America to support our shortsighted policy of excluding China from the United Nations. We have grossly misused our political power – if it may be called that – by planting the CIA in some 60 countries to carry on its work of subversion. We have misused our military power in forcing our weapons on scores of nations around the globe, maintaining military organizations and alliances like NATO and SEATO – the first of which has outlived its usefulness, the second of which never had any usefulness to begin with. And we are now engaged in a monstrous misuse of power in waging war on a distant people that does not accept our ideology. We have even misused our moral power, by bringing pressure on former allies and associates to join us in the cold war against the Soviet Union and China; and history may yet find the United States chiefly responsible for exacerbating the disunity of Germany and the division between East and West by exploiting Germany for cold war purposes. That seems to be the de Gaulle interpretation of our role in Europe, and de Gaulle is more often right than wrong.

As we have greater power than any other nation, so we should display greater moderation in using it and greater humility in justifying it. We display neither moderation nor humility, but immoderation and that arrogance of power which Senator Fulbright has so eloquently denounced.

In the long run, then, the abuse of the executive power cannot be separated from the abuse of national power. If we subvert world order and destroy world peace we must inevitably subvert and destroy our own political institutions first. This we are now in the process of doing.

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Black and Blue In Chicago

by Richard E. Rubenstein and Stephen M. Kaplan

The Black are Chicago's approximately one million Negroes (some 28 percent of the population), heavily concentrated on the South Side. The Blue are its 12,000 policemen, almost as heavily concentrated on duty in the same area. Even if there were no national political convention coming up in August on that same South Side, the mix would be explosive. The prospect of racial disturbances occurring while the world's attention is focused on the Democratic meeting, the police being occupied with non-official massive demonstrations, is enough to shake even the imperturbable Mayor Daley. And so, this spring finds the city engaged in an orgy of planning. From City Hall to the hangouts of the Blackstone Rangers, strategy sessions are under way.

Many observers close to street youth are seriously worried about possible outbreaks of highly selective, terroristic violence carried on by armed cadres and supported by the rest of the black community. Police Superintendent James Conlisk says he is sanguine about the prospects for peace, but he will talk only in the vaguest, most general terms. (Pessimism helps to create riots, he believes.) Meanwhile, the preparations go on. City Hall is the scene of weekly meetings between representatives of the police department, mayor's office, FBI, US Army, Illinois National Guard, US Marshals, Secret Service and "civilian disorder control experts." Their purpose is to map out a "peacemaking strategy" and to settle internal conflicts.

Chicago police are well known for the riot-prevention and riot-control techniques developed during the 1965-66 riots and the blizzard looting of 1966-67. Now they hope to create a national model for the suppression of civil disorders. In addition, a bewildering array of city agencies, in cooperation with the Police Department's Community Relations Division, is working to lay on the most lavish summer program for ghetto youth in the city's history.

It is worth inquiring why Chicago has not yet had a major Watts- or Detroit-type revolt. Superintendent Conlisk bases his confidence the summer will be peaceful on his department's riot-prevention programs that "have led the way toward preventing disorders." Many CPD techniques, he is proud to say, "have been implemented by police departments in other cities." Conlisk points to his community relations efforts, intended to demonstrate the "good heart" of the Police Department, and of the summer sports program which should reach about 100,000 youngsters this year. But these are not the innovations which have enhanced the CPD's reputation with other law enforcement agencies. The techniques being copied nationally are those developed by the department at the time of the relatively minor 1966 riots, and applied during the peaceful (as it turned out) summer of 1967. The basic idea, as expressed by Jay Miller, director of the Illinois ACLU, is "wholesale arrests coupled with high bail." It works like this:

Phase I – A large number of policemen (about 1,500) are placed on full-time riot patrol. This highly trained and fully mobile force is divided into tactical units stationed in each district which can be reinforced by a "flood of blue" at any trouble spot in minutes. Once on the scene, they offer crowds a choice between "clearing the area" or getting arrested.

Last summer, for example, after a white bartender had shot a man as a result of an argument over a bicycle, the police appeared in force almost immediately, formed a wedge, and gave the assembled crowd 10 seconds to "move on." They then made a sweep, arresting everyone who had not moved completely out of the area, including two employees of a nearby garage who were merely watching from their place of business. (Their employer was threatened with arrest when he protested.) The technique was employed again when a youthful crowd gathered outside the South Side's Waller School, throwing stones and generally raising hell. The assemblage of about 800 was outnumbered by police in a matter of minutes, and mass arrests followed. The CPD has not been tested by simultaneous outbreaks at several loca-

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tions; all disturbances thus far have been spontaneous, and have been squelched before the fire could spread to other parts of the city.

Phase II – This requires cooperation (some would say collusion) among court officials, public prosecutors and perhaps even public defenders in setting extremely high bail for those arrested – high enough to keep them off the streets for a month, or all summer if necessary. During last winter's looting, according to Jay Miller, bail for dragnet victims was routinely set at from $5,000 to $50,000 at the request of the corporation counsel (normal bail in such cases generally runs from $25 to $1,000). The judges seemed ready to comply with the counsel's requests; remarks from the bench, such as, "You people are worse than grave robbers," were frequent.

The same practice was continued during the summer of 1967; in almost 300 cases, those arrested in "sweeps" or dragnets cooled their heels for two weeks to a month in jail because they could not raise the excessive bail, and many lost their jobs as a result. A group of black attorneys, with support from the ACLU, have won partial victories in court attacks on disorderly conduct and mob action statutes, upon which the police have based their "sweeps" policies in the past. They are also challenging the high bail policy, but a decision here is not expected before the end of the summer.

Even those most suspicious of the police are forced to admit that these methods, constitutional or not, have helped Chicago avoid a major racial blow-up. Moreover, the department enjoys the advantage of substantial integration; despite the recent disclosure of an active KKK cell with white police membership, the CPD is probably less racist than most urban police departments. The hard question is whether the "mass arrest-high bail" policy, coupled with the riot-prevention techniques we shall describe later, are increasing the probability of what Chicago University's Morris Janowitz calls "more specific, more premeditated and more regularized uses of force" – that is, something closer to guerrilla warfare.

For example, the Reverend John Fry of the First Presbyterian Church (meeting place of the Blackstone Rangers) describes the prime CPD "riot-prevention" technique as day-by-day intimidation of ghetto residents intended to impress them with police power and to create a disinclination to mix it up with authority. "Casual brutality by the police in the ghetto has been allowed to flourish in a way that has not been seen since before [former commissioner] Orlando Wilson's administration," he says. Fry maintains that after Mayor Daley's press conference announcing the selection of Chicago as the convention site, the amount of "casual brutality" in Negro areas like Woodlawn and Kenwood increased, and for the first time "a much tougher line was taken with the kids."

"The kids" deserves some explanation. The black youth of Chicago (unlike Watts and Detroit) are highly organized in gangs like the Blackstone Rangers and the Disciples. These are not typical warring groups which control a few blocks of "turf," but rather "super-gangs" – coalitions of neighborhood clubs occupying large territorial blocs, devoting themselves to a variety of social, cultural and political activities, and engaging in violence to defend their boundaries, or to increase their membership. Last year, for instance, the Rangers produced a highly successful television show using local talent, participated in a live-in experiment sponsored by the Chicago Theological Seminary, worked closely with the Woodlawn Organization, reportedly tipped off friendly black police officials to potential disorders, and were involved in several shootings arising out of rival gang recruitment attempts. Many would argue that the Rangers and other gangs played a more important role than the police in preventing duplication of a Detroit-scale riot in Chicago by providing quasi-legitimate channels for the expression of group interests and demands.

This appears to be changing, however, as a result of increasing bitterness in the ghetto. Ranger leader Mickey Cogwell attributed a 50 percent drop in the Woodlawn crime rate to the gang's work: "Police don't stop the crime rate. We stopped it." He then attacked the CPD harshly for acts of brutality generally and harassment of Rangers in particular. Mr. Fry agrees. He states that during the "live-in" sponsored by the Chicago Theological Seminary, the house occupied by seminary students and Rangers was entered by police on nine occasions between October 16, 1967 and January 1, 1968 with 42 phony arrests, on charges ranging from disorderly conduct to armed robbery. The civil rights committee of the Woodlawn Organization has a thick dossier documenting harassment of gang members and brutality toward other ghetto residents, ranging from illegal "stop and frisk" activities and the handing out of unearned traffic tickets, to killings like that of star student Kenneth Alexander. Alexander was shot without warning when police, without identifying themselves, turned a spotlight on him and several of his friends, causing them to panic and run. (The grand jury refused to indict the policeman involved in this case.)

Clearly, some forms of "riot prevention" may be counterproductive. According to Rennie Davis, an organizer of the radical coalition which will direct political demonstrations at the time of the Democratic convention, police infiltration of a wide range of political and social organizations, white and black, has be-

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come so extensive that several groups are initiating lawsuits against known infiltrators on the grounds of violation of the rights of privacy and free association. Davis also agrees with other observers who state that police are attempting to get photographs and even voice-prints (via tape recorder) of persons attending such meetings in order to have a suspect file ready in case of trouble this summer.

The message to black people is meant to be unambiguous: if they are thinking about starting something in July or August, or if they just don't want their names and descriptions on file at police headquarters, they had better steer clear of established groups and operate in small squads which cannot be infiltrated. The powers-that-be in Chicago, as well as in other cities, have yet to realize that undermining recognized leaders and political groups (even Dick Gregory, H. Rap Brown, black nationalist groups and street gangs) may incite the anarchy they want to prevent.

The buying of information poses similar dangers. Estimates of the amount of police "talk money" now flowing into the ghetto are speculative, but the sale of information has become a major ghetto industry. Already, one hears talk of violent reprisals against those known to have "sold out," and of increased efforts on the part of black organizations to keep their membership select and their plans secret. The parallel with Vietnam is inescapable. There, counterinsurgency techniques dependent upon soliciting betrayals separated the "strongest" from the "weakest" elements of the community, driving the former into conspiratorial activity and the latter into ostracism. Moreover, the sense of collective guilt generated by selling out often leads to expiation by violence. Following the Watts uprising, rewards offered for information leading to the capture of snipers, arsonists and looters went unclaimed.

Ironically, the riot prevention and control techniques – a source of much pride to Superintendent Conlisk – may thus be breaking down the very barriers to guerrilla-type violence which existed in the past. Those who lost jobs because of the dragnet-high bail tactic are not disposed to forgiveness. Neither are the victims of "casual brutality" or members of community organizations which have been infiltrated by police spies. Gangs like the Rangers have moved from the "asset to law and order" to the "doubtful" category. "Nobody," says Mr. Fry, "is going to co-opt the Rangers – least of all the police." The real danger is not that a few blacks will set fires or derail the Illinois Central, but that the black community will become willing to support hit-and-run tactics. The danger is increased when overt organizations are driven to cover and authority is radically decentralized.

Meanwhile, what of white racism, which the Kerner Comn. the root cause of ghetto violence. am, Superintendent Conlisk's executive . nd one of the CPD's most able administrato. ates that the Police Department takes the Riot Commission's report very seriously and is already taking steps to implement its recommendations on police operations. For example, CPD is *not* arming with massive firepower or "esoteric" crowd-control weapons. It should be said, too, that it is cracking down hard on personal abuse of citizens by patrolmen. On the other hand, there has been no report that the Police Department will replace its inadequate citizens' complaint machinery with a civilian review board.

Other white dominated organizations are much less amenable to reason. Sheriff Woods of Cook County threatened to invade the city, if necessary, with a volunteer "posse" of 1,000 armed with their own weapons, before his plan was declared illegal by the courts. Residents of the lily-white Northwest Side have launched a school boycott to protest a token busing program, and a handful of black students transferred to a suburban grade school met with a Little Rock reception. The Illinois National Guard, in a brilliant "reorganization" threw out its only top-ranking black officer, as well as the white commander who dared to stand up for him.

"The city," says South Side Alderman Leon Despres, "is not doing anything to deal with the fundamental problems of inequality and poverty." In a recent statement, one of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King's aide's, C. T. Vivian, is harsher: "Chicago is as racist and segregated as ever."

Against this background, the Democratic convention appears almost irrelevant. Dick Gregory's threat to "hit the streets in May" in order to discourage the Democrats from meeting here has generated little response. Although a new coalition on the left is in the process of formation, Roosevelt University's Charles Hamilton confirms that most militant black organizations are not terribly interested in its plans for August demonstrations. Black guerrillas *might*, of course, try to take advantage of the confusion – if, for example, white troops defending the International Amphitheatre are stationed on ghetto streets, or if police are called in to protect ghetto welfare offices or slumlord homes from demonstrators.

Chicago has been spared a catastrophe in past years for a variety of reasons, but principally because its black citizens have been unwilling to make CPD anti-riot techniques obsolete by supporting systematic, widespread violence. And no matter how elaborate the city's plans for this summer, the chief deterrent to racial warfare will still be the patience of its black community.

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Stanley Kauffmann on films

The Poet and The Pimp

Pier Paolo Pasolini's first film *Accatone* (1961) gets its American theatrical premiere long after it has, quite literally, found a place in cinema history. (Several books of the last few years discuss it.) His later films, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* and *The Hawks and the Sparrows*, have already been shown here. I saw *Accatone* four years ago in Rome, again at the

Accatone
(Brandon)

1966 New York Festival, and again recently; and, for me, it lives as a work of narrow but intense vision – a film about viciousness and criminality that evokes compassion. Its style is neorealist: it was made on locations, not in studios, with non-professional performers. Sometimes this method makes merely literal films, but it gives *Accatone* a grainy, gripping, authenticity.

Pasolini came to films after winning distinction as a novelist and poet. (One of his novels, *Ragazzi*, which stirred up a storm when it was published in Italy in 1955, will appear here later this year.) He won the Viareggio Prize for poetry in 1957 with *The Ashes of Gramsci*. In the following year Sergio Pacifici called Pasolini "one of the youngest and most mature poets to come to prominence [in Italy] after the last war," then went on to say:

> "Certainly the reference to Gramsci, the founder of the Communist Party in Italy, is more than a mere tribute. . . . It was Gramsci who, in the late twenties, writing from the jail where he was to die, urged the formation of a new culture that to become 'popular' must reflect the aspirations of the people. . . . Pasolini has already done much to narrow the gap that has always existed between life and literature in Italy."

I had a chance to speak with Pasolini on television in New York in 1966 and took up this point. His use of dialect in prose and verse was obviously an attempt to make literature "popular" in the Marxian sense; was this the same impulse that had taken him to neorealism in films? Yes, he replied, but more than that, the results had led him to abandon literature for filmmaking, at least for a time. In his writing (I paraphrase from memory) he had sought the quintessences of factualness. Film gave him the power of fact to *start* with, and he could go on from there. In his two best films so far, *Accatone* and *St. Matthew*, I think this is precisely what he has accomplished.

Accatone, the hero's nickname, means "beggar." (The dialogue is in Roman slum dialect which, I am told, many upper-class Romans have trouble in following. This effect – untranslatable – makes the slum a segregated province, moated and clannish.) Accatone is a pimp and spends most of his time lounging about with other young men who apparently are also pimps. Their scenes are like big-city criminal versions of the loungings of the aimless small-town youths in Fellini's *I Vitelloni*. Accatone's girl, whose prostitution supports them both, is jailed – a considerable term, for perjury. He has no money, but it is a principle with him (as with his companions) not to work for a living, the way his brother does. Accatone nearly starves. His friends respect his fidelity to principle at the same time that they do nothing to help him; in fact, they taunt him. (This, too, seems part of the code.) Then he finds another girl, seduces her, and induces her to try whoring. Because she loves him, she attempts it but cannot go through with it. He is now so emotionally involved with this girl that he sacrifices his principles and tries a job, but *he* cannot go through with *that*. He turns to thievery as a means of keeping his girl off the streets, is chased by police, jumps on a motorcycle, and is killed in a collision.

This synopsis may suggest a tract about society forcing criminality on the poor, of pimps and whores as pawns of capitalism's ruthlessness. Pasolini is too good for that. Certainly the film is aware that bourgeois society needs prostitutes as black endorsements of its virtue, just as it needs thieves to endorse the sanctity of property; but Pasolini is a Marxian *artist*. His Marxism directs his sympathies, then his art takes over. His people exercise options as completely – if not as widely – as anyone else. Accatone lives as stringently by his code as any parfait gentle knight. He embraces his small son to steal the boy's medallion and pawn it to dress his girl for her trade, but he does it with an air that says the child would understand if he were old enough. No facile tears for the victimized poor. Accatone is not much more a victim than most of us, and he has more pride (though inverted) than many non-pimps.

As for Pasolini's direction, its most remarkable feature is that, although *Accatone* is seven years old – seven years of accelerating stylistic innovations – it is neither up-to-date nor old-fashioned. It is a piece of straightforward, traditional, intelligent filmmaking. There are no "poetic" shots – nothing remotely as stunning as the elevation of the cross in *St. Matthew*. Pasolini's strength in *Accatone* is not in fancy camerawork or in editing but in his almost violent immediacy to his material. He selects and states – simply, fiercely. The simplicity conveys the fierceness. Yet the picture is not spare: it sits in a nice full texture of these people's rites and habits.

Pasolini has chosen his cast excellently – for individual flavor and balanced colors. Franco Citti, the Accatone, has a blunt, unforgettable face, square-jawed yet with the requisite weakness, a man whose self-pity flows so readily that it makes us pity the man who needs it so badly. Franca Pasut, his (second) girl, is heavy, servile, pretty, very moving in her devotion to Accatone and her remorse at not being able

(Continued on page 37)

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Books and the Arts

Van Gogh: The Fever of Genius

by Robert Coles

We have had recent cause to shudder at what a certain kind of psychoanalytic biography can do; the study of Woodrow Wilson's purported hang-ups, a disastrous exercise full of simple-minded, arrogant and spiteful comments mixed with awkward, ostensibly humorous formulations; the long and unfortunate book about Whitaker Chambers and Alger Hiss, whose text

Vincent Van Gogh: A Psychological Study
by Humberto Nagera
(International Universities Press; $6.50)

again and again demonstrated how psychoanalytic interpretations, like any other sort, can be used in a partisan, moralistic, antagonistic way. And from year to year for those of us willing to read them, the articles continue to appear – telling how Kafka never got over the bad time he had with his father, or how Emily Dickinson didn't quite succeed in overcoming one or another "psychotic process."

Such thinking fails to distinguish between universal human conflicts and the distinctive craft of the writer or the artist, or for that matter, the doctor, the lawyer, the businessman. Millions of people have directly or obscurely fought with their fathers. Millions of men and women have felt "ambivalent" toward their mothers, have suffered "sibling rivalry" – as Van Gogh did. Yet, what made Vincent Van Gogh, or Kafka? What separates one person from another? A *person* is more than a bundle of neurotic problems, or as one prominent psychiatrist put it, "a series of structural systems in conflict." A person is a particular man or woman who either has or has not put to use the various endowments, experiences and possibilities that go into each life. Nor can a person, especially a genius like Van Gogh, be confused with what makes him a bit, or more than a bit odd. Put differently, Freud generally knew the limits of his own "view," or way of looking at man; and he never claimed that the particular experiences he as a clinician wanted to study were *all* the experiences that existed.

It can be said that some of Freud's self-proclaimed followers have done with his ideas exactly what they are so eager to do with the books or canvases of other great men. That is, Freud's complicated, rich notions, hard-won and meant to be tentative, are given sweeping, uncritical authority. The dead artists and writers whose "problems" are "analyzed" at length suffer the insult of narrow-minded, idiotic caricature, and so does the ghost of Freud.

Significantly, two of the most thoughtful recent psychoanalytic essays have been prompted by the lives of Leonardo da Vinci and Van Gogh. Kurt Eissler, one of the most respected and learned of the older group of American analysts, has written a long and interesting, if overly apologetic book on Leonardo. He is least successful in his effort to defend Freud's study of da Vinci against attacks on it by art historians and critics. Toward the end of the book, however, one stumbles upon a rather surprising train of thought. Many geniuses like Leonardo (or Van Gogh) are also very troubled men: "The question, however, has not been answered, what connection exists between the genius's psychopathology and his achievements. Psychopathology, in general, is looked upon as defect. . . . Observation of the genius, however, suggests the possibility that psychopathology is indispensable to the highest achievements of certain kinds." If that is so, if a certain genius demonstrates psychopathology which may be "indispensable to his geniushood," then Dr. Eissler is up against a real problem. Unlike most analysts, he is willing to face it:

> "Consequently if what we observed in the genius struck us as neurotic or psychotic or perverse or even criminal, we would then have to reconsider our classification under these accustomed headings. If, for example, an apparently obsessional symptom were observed and it turned out that symptom was indispensable to geniushood . . . there would be no sense in calling it a neurotic symptom. Whatever the essence of neurosis may be, the concept of neurosis makes sense only when it is correlated with a deficit."

Just before he wrote *Werther*, Goethe repeatedly attempted suicide. Here is how such "morbidity" strikes Dr. Eissler:

> "This behavior pattern (and particularly Goethe's rationalization of the choice of method . . .) is under ordinary circumstances characteristic of a deep-seated disturbance and may even announce the onset of a malignant psychosis. Goethe, however, shortly thereafter wrote his famous novel *Werther* in which the hero ends his life by shooting himself. . . . The biographical evidence compels us to connect Goethe's 'neurotic symptom' with his subsequent successful writing of the novel. It can be safely said that only somebody who had repeatedly gone through the throes of preparing for suicide could have presented it so overwhelmingly as Goethe. . . . Here, then, we have a conspicuous, example of undeniable pathological behavior that was one of the indispensable prerequisites for the writing of one of the greatest novels. If we continue to call such behavior

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an indication of a neurosis or psychosis, we make such categories meaningless."

I am not sure that Eissler is right, that *only* someone who has attempted suicide can write about it convincingly. I am, however, struck by his dangerous willingness to propose a virtual "special-interest group," the genius. Once the floodgates are open, any of us may find ourselves carried along by the current. Men like Eichmann have, after all, been called "sane," and thereby that particular "category" has also been made a bit senseless. White people (certainly including upper-middle-class psychiatric "practitioners") have been told they can neither understand black men nor apply to them white standards and measurements. And so it goes – quite correctly, I believe. Eissler is struggling valiantly but perhaps hopelessly with the built-in rigidities of a conceptual system that was originally meant to clarify only certain actions of particular individuals – members of Vienna's turn-of-the-century bourgeoisie. By ignoring (relatively) such bothersome problems as the relationship between a patient's problems and his race, class, values, it is possible for a psychoanalyst to bear down on certain "psychological" developments, developments that some analysts resolutely call "internal," as relentless and universal as life itself. Eventually, though, issues of "health," "creativity," "normality" or "sickness" arise in most analyses. Who decides which "inner process," which sort of psychological "adjustment" is valuable and which is to be frowned upon? Who is the arbiter, who is to call one man a madman and another a valuable eccentric? Is the psychoanalyst really "objective," or really free of social constraints and common values? How does the mental doctor – who obviously is *not* doing the same kind of thing as his medical colleagues – make his decisions? Where does he get his standards, his "criteria"? These are vexing questions, and right now we haven't enough knowledge to answer them satisfactorily. We are fools if we think we do. Dr. Eissler is a first-rate scholar, not a fool. He knows irony when he sees it, and

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knows when to stop applying knowledge to others and look inward in order to ask exactly what is known about whom. Perhaps his good sense – in some respects it is common-sense – will filter through to the provinces.

Humberto Nagera's recent "psychological study" of Vincent Van Gogh follows the same line of reasoning that Eissler suggests. He also makes an important avowal: "Though one can identify the early origins of the feelings expressed on the canvas, the means by which Van Gogh succeeded in expressing them, in embodying them on the canvas, in conveying them to the casual observer, remains to this day the secret of his genius and the testimony of it." That is very good, and should be put at the beginning of the book, rather than at the end of a middle chapter.

Dr. Nagera's study begins with one of those lovely gems that occasionally grace a significant psychoanalytic work, a foreword by Anna Freud. The directness and clarity of Miss Freud's writing, its unashamed humanity, strike a contrast with all too much of what one finds in psychoanalytic journals. She speaks of "the sincerity of feeling, the force of expression and the depth of human suffering" that Van Gogh's letters and canvases demonstrate. She compliments her colleague on his ability to summon a "striking image of a high-minded individual's struggles against the pressures within himself," and she reminds us that "even the highly prized and universally envied gift of creative energy" won't always work to keep in check an artist's particularly ruinous disposition.

Dr. Nagera has not tried to "interpret" Van Gogh's *paintings* or "explain" why he was an artist, but to show through his prolific correspondence (mostly with his brother Theo) how a particular mind came to terms with the burden of its past and the contrasting daily hope implicit in extraordinary artistic sensibility. Perhaps just because he set himself that kind of task, Dr. Nagera has written a clear, tactful and poignant account of Van Gogh's life – an account impressively free of psychoanalytic jargon and overwrought, abstract formulations. As Miss Freud points out, Dr. Nagera does indeed rely heavily on Van Gogh's letters, themselves an awesome work of art. But he also becomes, without ostentatious effort, a decent, sensitive and shrewd biographer – who wants to look without envy at the entire span of a great life rather than bear down exclusively and relentlessly on its pitfalls.

Vincent Willem Van Gogh was born in Zundert, near the Belgian frontier. Unlike Rembrandt, who came from a family of sturdy, pious burghers, Van Gogh's ancestors included a number of very well-educated and rich men. His maternal grandfather studied theology at the University of Leiden, one uncle was a vice admiral, and three others were art-dealers, one in Rotterdam and later Brussels, one in Amsterdam, one in The Hague and then Paris. The latter uncle had no children of his own and for a while viewed his nephew as successor and heir. As for the painter's immediate family, his father was a minister of a moderate sect of the Dutch Reformed Church; his mother was the daughter of a famous bookbinder, her family also being connected to the world of art through the marriage of her niece to the well-known Dutch painter A. Mauve.

Detailing these matters Dr. Nagera gives us a sense of those family, social and cultural circumstances which would have a decisive bearing on the future painter's life. He also places great emphasis on the fact that Van Gogh was born exactly one year to the day after an older brother, scarcely delivered, suddenly died. He also had been named Vincent. "The replacement of a dead child by another has been a subject of study by a number of psychoanalysts," says Dr. Nagera. He spares the reader a review of the "literature," and is content to suggest that a mother who has recently lost a son may still be grieving when she gives birth to another. She may even be desperate about the possibility of losing her new child, which thus becomes both a sign of redemption and a source of apprehension; and as the child himself grows up he may acquire "a conviction of his inadequacy and vulnerability in a world of constant unpredictable dangers." Dr. Nagera keeps coming back to this theme, particularly when he is discussing Van Gogh's obvious vulnerability at the end of his life, when he was a broken and haunted man, prey to delusions, hallucinations and suicidal urges. We are also reminded that the painter's mother never really appreciated her son's abilities: "When she moved away from Nuenen, a year after her husband's death, Vincent's paintings were packed in cases and totally forgotten, with the result that the carpenter at Bredo in whose care they were left sold everything after several years to a junk dealer!"

Interestingly enough, the author finds it harder to formulate what he nevertheless (to his great credit) keeps on recording – the evidence from Van Gogh's early childhood that he was *not* a lunatic who quite inexplicably could paint. He may have had a "rejecting mother" as some categorical and simple-minded doctors put it – thereby themselves rejecting the subtleties and ambiguities of a particular life. Nevertheless, the mother who herself liked to paint was also one whose son was doing watercolors and drawings at the age of eight. A few of them, along with some of the mother's,

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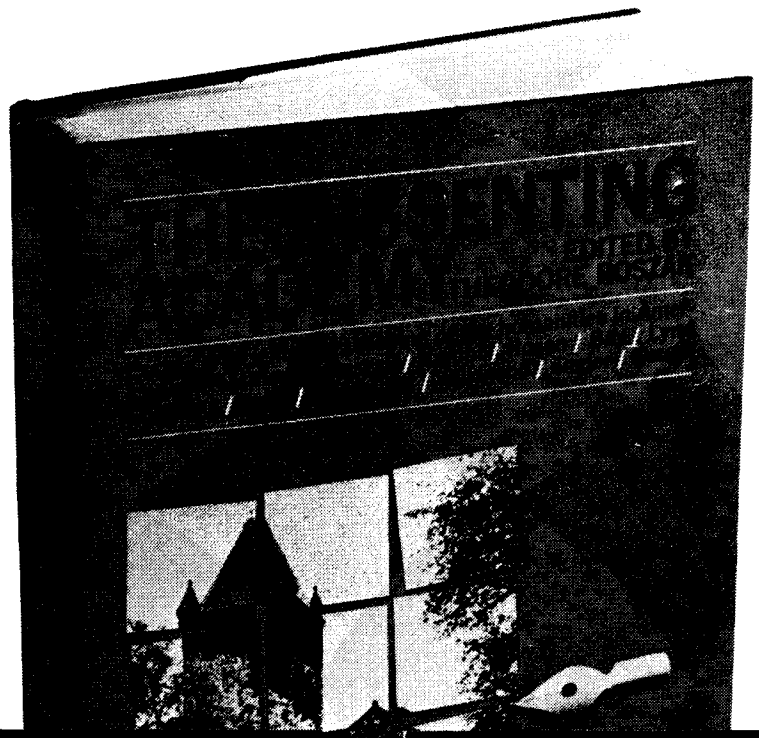

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can be found reproduced in *The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, published about a decade ago by the New York Graphic Society. At twelve he was still painting, not all the time, nor brilliantly, but with obvious talent and perseverence. In 1864, for his father's birthday he made a drawing entitled "Farm and Wagon-Shed" – which somehow his mother kept through the years, however "unaware" she was of her son's genius.

In any event, when Vincent was 16 he was sent to The Hague to join his uncle's firm of art-dealers. As a child he had been described as self-willed, and as a young man he would be found exactly that. For a while he was a willing apprentice, first in Holland and later in the London branch of the company. His younger brother, Theo, also became an apprentice in the firm (in Brussels, then in Paris) and it was at this point in their lives that they started a continuous, outspoken, intimate correspondence which would be ended only by Vincent's death. Theo is the steady, earnest, sympathetic one, in contrast to Vincent's passionate, moody, searching and argumentative nature. In The Hague Vincent seems confident, satisfied with his young manhood, but in London he sounds not only lonely and homesick but a little too strongly nostalgic for the past, at 20 the very recent past of childhood.

In London, Van Gogh fell in love with his landlady's daughter but was rebuffed. He became more and more religious, reading the Bible and praying in long stretches. Intensely on his own, he seemed without joy. In 1875 he was transferred to Paris, and soon dismissed because he showed no interest in his work. He had actually liked England, for all his sadness there, and in 1876 at 23, he returned, now to teach. He spoke both English and French fluently, and rather enjoyed working with children. He also did some drawings and continued his study of the Bible, which soon became his chief interest. Returning to Holland, he secured a job as a bookseller in Dordrecht, but it was *the* Book that absorbed his time and energy. Deciding to become a minister, like his father, he moved to Amsterdam, where he lived with his uncle, the commander of

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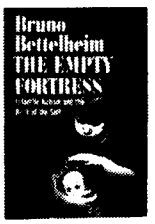

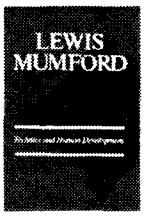

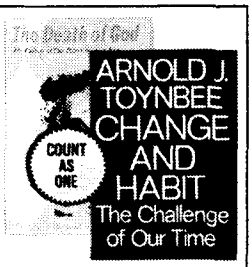

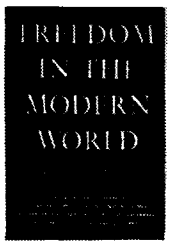

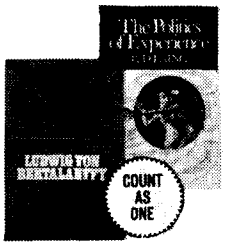

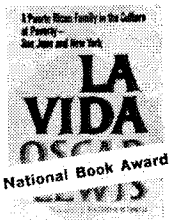

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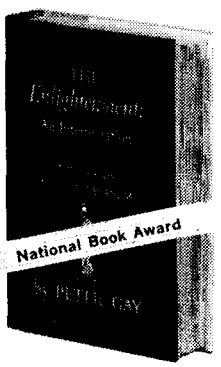

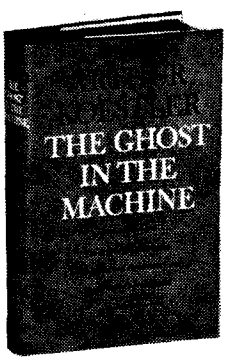

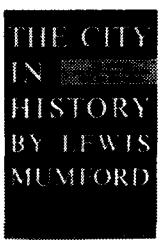

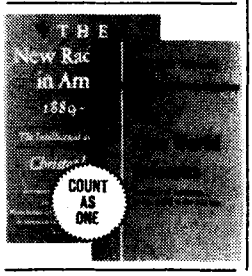

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a naval base. He studied Latin and Greek and became increasingly ascetic, denying himself a bed, and eating frugally. Abandoning formal theology, he decided to go among the poor as an evangelist. Living among Belgian miners, he read to them from the Bible, taught and cared for their children, visited their sick. He slept on the floor of an old shack and gave everything he had to those desperately poor and hardworking people.

But Van Gogh was considered a "sick" man. His religious superiors found him "overzealous" and eventually dismissed him. Van Gogh was one of those troubled, foolish men who tried to live up to Christ's spirit – in the belief that God's Will had to do with righting the concrete wrongs of the immediate world. His religious superiors wanted him to ask the workers for submission, for unquestioning faith, but instead, after witnessing a dreadful mine accident, Van Gogh became disenchanted with organized religion and began to wander through France, Belgium and Holland. He met a prostitute and decided to live with her, to redeem or save her – and at this point he begins to sound in his letters very much like the Dostoevsky of *Crime and Punishment*. He also started to draw in earnest, and for the first time to paint. For a while he stayed in Drenthe, a bleak, rain-drenched section of northern Holland where the great task is simply to stay alive. Then he abruptly returned home – shortly before his father's sudden death.

He was gravely upset, but at the same time was able to paint with more energy and conviction than ever before – all of which, according to Dr. Nagera, is no coincidence at all. Now the aspiring young artist went to Antwerp and was quickly expelled from the Academy as a wild, childish man of no talent. Moving to Paris, he studied and worked on his own and met other painters. Finally he left for the South, the "glorious South," settling in Arles on the Rhone. The sunshine was everywhere, orchards were in bloom. When he was not alone he was with "plain people" who did not clutter his mind with pompous talk, self-centered, distracting, faddish theories which both succeed and betray one another. He enjoyed his neighbors and his work. The paintings poured forth: "The Sunflowers," "The Yellow House," "The Harvest," "The Drawbridge," "The Boats on the Beach."

On October 20, 1888, Gauguin came. Dr. Nagera describes his mind as "cold and calculating"; like Van Gogh he was stubborn, proud, eccentric, fiercely independent. They fought – and eventually Van Gogh inflicted on himself the well-known injury that marked the beginning of a serious psychological disturbance. For the remaining two years of his life he was in and out of hospitals, with and without medical care. Nevertheless, he did one remarkable painting after another: "The Cypresses," "The Olive Trees," and dozens of pictures of the skies, the fields, and particular human beings. In addition he wrote to his beloved brother Theo, letters that were sad and tormented but also joyful and beautifully expressive. His last work was al-

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most tranquil. The brushwork becomes broader, the forms less distorted; things seem hopeful, even buoyant. Unaccountably, then, on July 27, 1890, he took to the fields, shot himself, and died two days afterwards. Half a year later on January 25, 1891 his brother Theo, long sick with nephritis, was also dead. They are buried side by side.

I suppose in this century it has to be noted that their love was tinged with "ambivalence." Dr. Nagera finds in their letters evidence of strain and tension, and he made his case with tact and intelligence. Still, much more went on in Vincent Van Gogh, and between him and his brother, than any "psychological study," no matter how well-intentioned or comprehensive, can even convey, let alone explain.

In his last six years, from age 31 to 37, Van Gogh produced 780 drawings and 500 oils. At the end he was seized by the fever of genius, and he submitted to it, letting it drive and inspire him, draw from him the sweat of work, of achievement. As death approached he grew resigned, as had Rembrandt. The two have many resemblances. Neither was scientific nor exact. Both worked intuitively. Both were interested in people, in what is called "character" or "expression," and favored the emotional, the mysterious. To a homely sitter Rembrandt would give a plumed hat, a turban, a "look" that made the exotic or the profound mere extensions of the commonplace. Both were deeply religious – but not in a remote or abstract way. Rembrandt never painted superhuman or symbolic religious protagonists, and Van Gogh's open, honest, religious feeling came through in almost every one of his letters. Even formally the two men are akin. At first Rembrandt's brush work was tight and restrained; toward the end he loosened up, turned to rich colors and painted as if he foresaw what direction another Dutchman would take much later on.

Radicals and Writing

by Theodore Solotaroff

A Sense of the Present is a more or less retrospective collection of William Phillips' writings, containing his major essays, several recent reviews, and three short stories. A founding editor of *Partisan Review*, Phillips has been obscured by the aura of his own magazine and his writing is less well-known than that of his colleague, Philip Rahv, a more prolific and more immediately assertive critic. Still, Phillips has a first-rate literary mind, and one is grateful to Chilmark Press for rescuing his work from the oblivion of literary journalism, though this volume would have profited from an index, running heads, and a fuller sampling of Phillips' writing, particularly the polemical pieces he contributed to a number of the *PR* controversies and symposia. There should also have been a fuller introduction or else a running commentary that placed these occasional writings in the context of Phillips' career. As it is, *A Sense of the Present* is a miscellany whose effect is rather scrappy and unprofessional, as though the book were a gesture in Phillips' behalf rather than the presentation of a significant body of his work.

A Sense of the Present
by William Phillips
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The coherence of Phillips' career and of these pieces derives from his loyalty to advanced thought and writing, and his intense concern about the conditions that foster and weaken it. Hence his interest in cultural politics, in the active relations between past and present, tradition and talent. Like Rahv and the writers who are generally identified with *PR*, he is a "prospective" critic, to use Rahv's distinction, rather than a "retrospective" one. He is more concerned with revealing the potentialities of literature and society than in protecting its norms and standards. But, though a modernist and a

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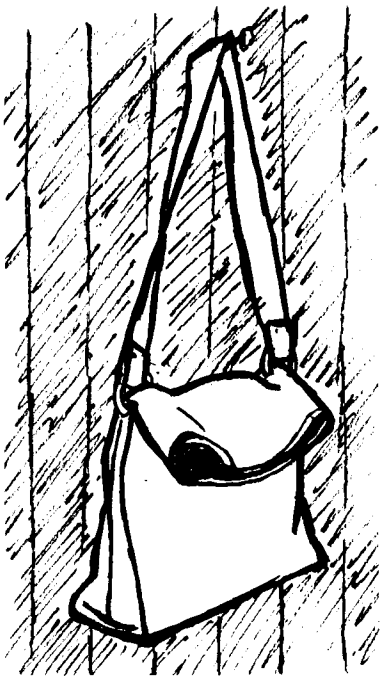

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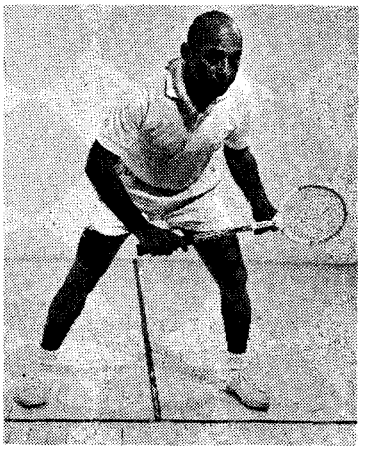

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socialist, Phillips, is no bohemian or activist and, as his fiction makes clear, he approaches the issues of liberation, whether political or literary, with the skepticism of the veteran intellectual whose final honor lies in not being taken in. The result is a tone of quiet outspokenness; partisanship and independence make up the dialectic of his intention and the immediate problems of literary culture its content. Relevance of judgment is the highest virtue.

His pieces on "The New Immoralists" (mostly Genet and Burroughs), "Writing about Sex" (mainly a critique of the anti-pornography arguments of George P. Elliott and George Steiner), and "Notes on the New Style" (centering around the carcers of Bellow and Mailer), are all attempts to confront and clarify the issues raised by the "sensibility of chaos" that has been bubbling up darkly from the new underground. These essays are, in effect, position papers by an editor/critic who has one foot in the avant-garde tradition of the past and who is looking for the more solid ground in contemporary writing on which to station the other. Other essays such as "What Happened in the Thirties," "Art and Psychoanalysis," "The American Establishment," and "The Intellectuals' Tradition" present the major bearings of Phillips' remarkably consistent perspective as well as the changing pressures of his commitment to the *Partisan Review* program of "purity in politics and impurity in literature."

One of the incidental benefits of *A Sense of the Present* is that it helps restore a sense of reality about *Partisan Review*. Except for his open letter to Mary McCarthy on the Hannah Arendt affair, there is no feeling at all of the ingrown atmosphere that is supposed to characterize this group. Furthermore, Phillips' astute and humane effort to cope with both sides of issues ("particularly depressing is the procession of polemics, with everyone arguing so cleverly, with so much force and logic, as though those awful events were being used to sharpen one's mind and one's rhetoric") is itself a model of the dialectical prowess, the passion for the clear and necessary distinction, the integrity of its commitments that have made up his journal's identity. All of which helps to remind one of the quality of *PR*'s interestedness, a quality that has been obscured and trivialized by eager-beaver journalists who make no distinction between writers' ideas and their careers.

In general, Phillips' sense of the present derives from the neo-Marxist orientation that has characterized his journal. He emphasizes the relations between the artist and society in the modern period, particularly as they turn upon tensions of alienation and accommodation. The characteristic note of modernism has been that of a "perverse and morbid idealism" and a preoccupation with "the connection between the real and the forbidden and fantastic." Until the 1930's, Phillips observes, these connections remained quite visible and potent. The avant-garde tradition of dissent and experiment begins with Baudelaire and Dostoevsky attempting to relate a new and darker psychology – bred by their feeling for the perverse, the criminal, the destructive elements – to the norms of traditional faith and morality. The major writers of the 20th century such as Proust, Joyce, Mann, Eliot, and Kafka, all created large coherent visions of the human condition in which a kind of remote and ideal consciousness broods over the infirmities of modern culture and society, and struggles through negation and despair to reclaim some aspect of human values. Thus Proust transformed his homosexual theme so as to generalize his discoveries in the underlands of desire and memory, while Gide used it to dramatize the moral conflict between a man's nature and responsibilities. Even Kafka, who stood at a farther extreme from normal life, whose alienation from accepted categories of identity produced in him a virtually permanent state of crisis, still evidences the drives and compunctions of the social being – indeed, they are the nerves of his anguish. At whatever remove from the bourgeoisie these writers felt themselves to be, they still subscribed, according to Phillips, to the idea that "the forces making for a better society were to be found in society itself" and that "in some mysterious, often per-

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verse, way they represented its ideals and possibilities."

I'm not sure that these writers were quite so positive as this, but when Phillips speaks of their "bruised humanism," their role as "the moral conscience in exile," one knows what he means. At any rate, their lofty, mythic, essentially aesthetic view of society was challenged by the communist movement of the 1930's, which, according to Phillips, "broke the radical spirit of literature by lowering its sights and making it more palatable for popular consumption." In America, the influence of the Popular-Front mentality, a grass-roots, vulgarized, unauthentic Marxism, continued to be felt in the domesticated realism of the 40's and 50's, and has given support to the tyranny that continues to be exercised by the middle-class audience into which most intellectuals have willingly faded.

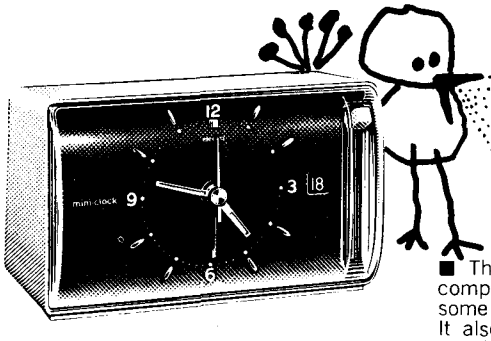
All of which has led in recent years to a new kind of literary radicalism, one which has sprung the remaining tensions between the artist and society and carried him to an extreme of alienation where demonic and perverse forces are embraced for their own sake. Like an affably corrupt psychiatrist whom almost nothing shocks and who sedulously extends his control through the rewards of dependency, modern civilization has forced the avant-garde into a stance of screaming dissent, one that amounts, in Phillips' phrase, to "di-civilization," the final province of freedom and opposition. For Burroughs society is a huge cell of addiction, where each man turns on in his own way – drugs, sex, money, social control – and where sado-masochistic fantasies are the opiate of the masses. For Mailer, there is the plastic community of the repressed with its carcinogenic atmosphere. For Genet, society is a series of unauthentic values to be subverted and inverted. What is affirmed or at least held up in fascinated interest are the elegant extremes of crime and depravity, an existentialism of pure act.

Thus, the "destructive element" in which Conrad advised writers to immerse themselves in the name of full consciousness looks more and more to be the very medium of contemporary art. At the shallow end are the parodists of culture – the campers, black comedians, the more advanced of the Rock groups, the pop artists and underground journalists and filmmakers – at the deeper end are the artists of dehumanization such as Genet and Beckett. And there are also the refugees from culture such as Norman Mailer and Susan Sontag, reasoning their way toward a "deformed innocence," to use Phillips' phrase for Genet, or toward the state of "detranscendence," to use Lionel Abel's for Burroughs.

Within this sensibility of utterness and chaos, Phillips attempts to draw his careful, intelligent distinctions. In protecting the whole enterprise from the rules and regulations of the moralists, for example, he makes the very useful point that from the Greeks to the present sex in literature has always been ideological – that is, an enactment of an idea of sex rather than of some basic mode of behavior whose naturalness and purity are now being distorted:

> "On the whole, though, the traditional idea of sex has been associated with the individual fate, that is, with human realization or destruction, through love and passion. And it is with this sexual tradition that both pornography and the new sexuality might be said to have broken, substituting for it a deflated, polymorphous idea of sex in which sex had in the past been located. It is an idea of sex that is experimental, unfettered, anarchic; and if, like more traditional views of sex, it is also represented as the expression of true being, it is based on a conception of being entirely fluid and unpredictable, and limited only by one's imagination.

Similarly, Phillips' essay on "Art and Psychoanalysis" is one of the best accounts I have read of the neurotic ele-



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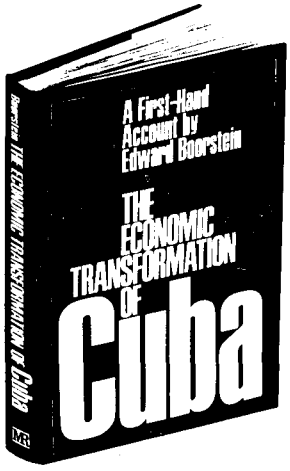

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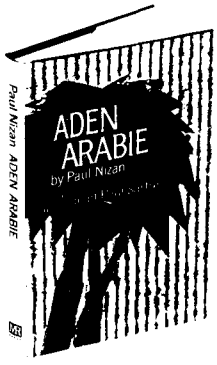
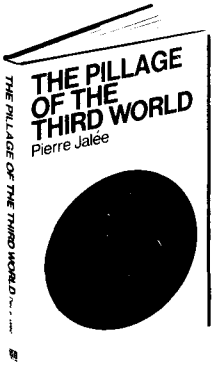
Paul Nizan is widely read and influential among modern French youth. In his introduction to *Aden, Arabie*, first of Nizan's books in English, Sartre says: "Who will speak to these 'angry young men'? Who can shed light on their violence? Nizan is their man." And Henri Peyre writes: "*Aden, Arabie* will hold a lasting place among the books of meditative travel written in our age. It is written in a beautifully terse and gravely elegant prose, and its author's untimely death in World War II deprived France of one who might well have been the equal of Camus." $6.00





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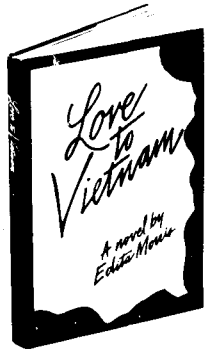

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ment in creativity and an excellent critique of the idea that "normality can . . . be regarded as a meaningful idea for writing." He believes that much of the new writing reflects and illuminates the guilty spirit of liberation at work in our times and that to deny its revelations is to deny what we secretly know about ourselves. In any case, the challenge is not to rule out or embrace the new writing, but to determine how successful the writer has been in generalizing his plight so as to provide a "bold and arresting sense" of our world.

Phillips is an illuminating and reasonable guide, but what seems to be missing is a partisan spirit about writing itself. He says that his criticism is intended to be "a form of intervention in the literary scene, not an objective statement about taste or value or meaning." His intervention in the present, however, consists in a rather lame advocacy of Mailer and Miss Sontag, a divided vote on Genet, impatience with Burroughs' endless exploration of his own fantasies, and faint praise of Barth, Selby, and Pynchon. Part of the problem is that he sums up writers rather than describes their work. You can present new writing by placing it in a trend but you can't expect your judgments to have much force. Thus Phillips' review of *In Cold Blood* is a more decisive critique of our literary confusion than any of the synoptic essays.

The development of a new radicalism in politics as well as in literature has tended to break up the former coalition of interests at *Partisan Review*. It seems to me fair to say that, like Phillips, it tends toward a retrospective politics and a prospective aesthetics. Rahv, on the other hand, has become one of the avuncular figures of the New Left and an outspoken critic of the New Writing, and he finds a more natural home in *The New York Review*. If Phillips had spoken directly to this split, I think his book would have taken on more force and his position more clarity.

Partisan Review thrived on its mutual interests in radicalism in politics and experimentalism in literature, each helping to "generalize" the other's concerns. In "What Happened in the Thirties," Phillips falls back on what

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he calls its "lesson": that "a radical literature and a radical politics must be kept apart." I think that European literature would have been woefully impoverished if this had been the case – little Brecht or Sartre, little Malraux, Silone, or the early Auden, just for a start – and there would be almost no Latin American literature at all. Phillips goes on to argue, "the moral hygiene, the puritanism, the benevolence, the rationalism – all the virtues that sprout on the left work like a cure for the perverse and morbid idealism of the modern writer." But this hardly describes the temper of the New Left; further, if this literary "idealism" has now run to an extreme, as Phillips finds, one wonders what development is left for it.

It may well be that radical politics offers the writer a motive for taking society and civilization seriously again, as well as an urgency for writing that recalls him from the dead end of nihilism and aestheticism. Such, at any rate, appears to be happening in poetry today. It's odd that Mr. Phillips should take the claims of avant-garde homosexuality so seriously and yet dismiss the peace movement as little more than split radicalism. Even the creative and intellectual elite, on which Phillips places his bet, are men after all, and it is politics, not homosexuality, that is becoming the underground of our time.

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The Jesus Who Keeps Coming Back

by William Hamilton

Just as we had become accustomed to the fact that the only first-rate religious fiction today is being written by Norman Mailer, this mad novel comes along to surprise and enchant us. A comic religious novel? A mixture of Joseph Heller and Nikos Kazantzakis, in the form of Pascal's *Pensées*? Impossible, but it has happened.

Langguth's novel is not only religious,

Jesus Christs
by A. J. Langguth
(Harper & Row; $4.94)

but it is Christian: not just because its subject is Jesus, but because it wrestles seriously and comically both with the meaning of Jesus and with the problem of becoming Jesus in the time of the death of God. The novel's Jesus is an odd one, to be sure. He keeps dying and getting out of the tomb over and over again, and each time he returns he reenters his past life in Palestine trying to clear up his mistakes, and also reenters the life men live today in the cities and suburbs.

There are many deaths and many resurrections, and thus many Jesus Christs. This is the single structural theme that holds together the book's fragments, which vary from one-line black religious jokes, to short stories, science fiction, and a comic revision of the Fourth Gospel.

This risen Lord is most often either an impotent fool or a wise healer who has lost his faith. Jesus tells a man on the road that he has come to die for his sins; the man replies, "What am I to die for?" Jesus takes his name and address and promises to send him his answer later. Jesus sets out on his journey, and opens his sealed orders: "Avoid Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Methodist denominations. . . . Be scrupulous in registering for the draft. . . . College teaching only as a last resort." Jesus sits in a study hall, drawing up a list of his liabilities and assets. The first list is a long one: "Impatient, demanding, self-righteous, moody, suspicious," and some others. He is dismayed, and shielding his paper from the girl sitting next to him, he makes a single entry under the "Assets" column, "Son of God." Then he closes his book and starts on his next day's assignment in Cicero. Or: Jesus and Peter come to a parking lot where a yellow convertible is waiting, the recent gift to the local successful minister from his grateful congregation. Jesus takes out his pocketknife and slashes the car's tires. When Peter berates him for his melodramatic gesture, Jesus reminds him that the fury of a spurned God still burns in his breast. Will you preach on that tonight, Peter asks. Oh no, Jesus replies, I'm speaking on God's mercy. "One of your troubles, Peter, is that you try to make things simple."

But the godless Jesus is also a touching figure, with both compassion and a wise self-knowledge. If I am ever again made sure about my message and myself, he says once, I will ask to be given a wiser understanding of the meaning of a touch between a man and a woman. Nathanael asks Jesus if God has spoken to him recently. No, not for a long time. We're all praying for you, Nathanael assures him. Jesus says he is willing to wait forever. Perhaps one should get a hobby in the meantime, Nathanael suggests. Perhaps we should all forget God. No, Jesus replies, not yet.

The black, comic, and religious themes are tied together for the reader when he sees that the death of God is the real subject of this novel. Certain central incidents testify to this. Jesus is witness at a congressional investigation, and suggests that "Bleep" (the word "God" is not allowed in the transcript of the hearing) will be adequately worshipped only when mankind starts to solve its own problems for itself.

Jesus notes with a little surprise that when God withdrew from him, the devil also withdrew and there was no more temptation, and, it seems, no more sin. Jesus is a guerrilla fighter and observes that since there is no God, he must now listen more attentively to his own bodily instincts, and they have said to him, "No more killing."

Jesus to Simon: "Guess what's more

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debasing than to believe in something that never existed." Simon asks, "What?" "To stop believing in something that never existed," Jesus answers.

The disciples are living together in a house, and Judas discovers an injection that will cure Death. Death is God, Philip says. Yes, says John, Judas has given us eternal life. They all fly off to the capitol to get a government grant to manufacture the medicine, and no one seems to know or care where Jesus went.

The most breathtaking and ambiguous fragment in this novel, it seems to me, is an interrogation between Jesus and a young Nazilike guard, a scene which is a cross between the encounter of Gletkin and Rubashov in *Darkness at Noon* and the Grand Inquisitor legend. The guard puts several contemporary indictments of Christianity to Jesus: Fromm's attack on perfectionism and guilt, the creation of D. H. Lawrence's attack on Christianity's life rejection, its insensitivity to touch and to sense. The guard suggests that Jesus can prolong his life if he is willing to be certified as insane. Jesus develops a serious nervous twitch on hearing this, admits that he has thought of this as a possibility, but decides against it as an escape. The guard admits that his rejection of Jesus has not been complete, that there is still a mysterious hold somewhere. Jesus assures him that he too will be saved, even though he doesn't believe. The guard leaps on Jesus and beats him with his pistol, perhaps killing him, perhaps not.

This superb scene captures the extraordinary flavor of this first novel. It is either one of the canniest rejections of the Christian enterprise in our time, or one of the subtlest expressions of admiration for Jesus. Or both. Or neither. There can be few readers it will not infuriate, delight, and help.

Notes on Contributors

Theodore Solotaroff *is editor of the* New American Review. William Hamilton *is co-author with* Thomas Altizer *of* Radical Theology and the Death of God. *He is currently professor of religion at the New Experimental College in Sarasota, Fla.*

Correspondence

The New Republic welcomes communications in regard to subjects of current interest. Those of 300 words or less are most suitable for publication.

US Interests vs US Policy

Sirs:

The logic of America's present Vietnam policy is leading to a conclusion incompatible with the ultimate interests of the United States; nuclear war, loss of sympathy in the third world and universal moral condemnation are all probable results of the program now being followed. . . . The past few weeks have illustrated that not only has the attempt to build a viable political infrastructure through the pacification program failed, an effort deemed central by the White House to our professed goal of political stability, but in addition the widely heralded military gains of the past two years have proven hollow. The Viet Cong supported by the North Vietnamese have a tactical advantage of South Vietnam which enables them to attack, disrupt and demoralize virtually any city at any time as well as render the countryside, through force or sympathy, hostile to the allied effort.

Current tactical responses used by the United States – nerve and nausea gases, fragmentary shells, defoliation, bombing population and cultural centers and napalm – have not reduced the operational advantage of the Viet Cong. Thus, to the Pentagon, the level of military exchange has been raised to the point where a tactical nuclear response will not appear as a qualitative change in the war effort. Therefore, one can assume that if the outcome of a particular battle was important enough, e.g. the defense of Khe Sahn or Saigon, the current conceptual structure would lead directly to a tactical nuclear response.

Secondly, the strategic situation in Asia provides further military advantages for the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese. The recent *Pueblo* incident indicates a reasonable degree of coordination between the communist governments of Asia. The governments of North Korea and the Pathet Lao, for instance, identify the defeat of the Park government and the fall of Souvanna Phouma respectively, with American defeat in South Vietnam. Therefore, should the North Vietnam government require assistance it would be within the interests of the North Koreans and Pathet Lao to initiate further incidents which will necessitate, according to present policy, the broadening of the American commitment in Asia; unable to fight three Vietnams simultaneously, Pentagon strategy would once again rely upon a tactical nuclear response to neutralize the overwhelming manpower and logistical advantage provided by the Asian mainland.

The Vietnam war can be viewed as a hand in a poker game whose stakes are the democratic development of the "third world" and the avoidance of nuclear catastrophe. The North Vietnamese, with their tactical and strategic advantages, hold all the high cards in this round. Present American strategy is to continually raise the ante in the hope that the North Vietnamese will be bluffed into retiring from the hand. There is little evidence that this will occur; the logical consequence of America's policy is the use of tactical nuclear weapons with its inherent disastrous consequences.

One would imagine that long-range American interests could be realized more readily by withdrawing from this hand, leaving us in a better position to continue the game.

Stefan A. Halper
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Oxford, England

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Correction

Sirs:

A line was omitted in my article "Lo, the Poor Indian" (March 30). On page 14, column two, the final sentence of the second full paragraph should read: With responsibility for Indian health services already in HEW, the Task Force diplomatically concluded by emphasizing that "HEW programs emphasize human development as contrasted with Interior's program emphasis on conservation and natural resources."

Ralph Nader

Too Powerful a President

Sirs:

James MacGregor Burns, a consistent advocate of a more powerful and energetic Presidency, indicates that Louis Heren's central concern in *The New American Commonwealth* is "about the vigorous but responsible exercise of presidential power." Heren, as Burns, is skeptical of the feasibility of such reforms as cabinet government in the American system. Apparently Heren is not disturbed by a powerful President per se, but the way this power has been used in both the past and present. He also feels that the men surrounding the President – close aides and advisers, party politicians and congressional leaders – cannot really check a willful President.

Unfortunately Professor Burns completely fails to respond to these essential issues. We are only left with the hopeful encomium that the American Presidency "is our greatest single instrument both for elevating our expectations and for achieving them. We cannot disown it now." Since Heren does not advocate dismembering the Presidency, Professor Burns' final warning seems at best gratuitous. If Burns is dismayed at the behavior of the present incumbent in the Office (as I read it between the lines) then he ought to have confronted this question squarely. After all, the history of the Presidency demonstrates that today's excesses may set tomorrow's precedents.

Arnold J. Bornfriend
The City College of New York

Mr. Buckley Dissents

Sirs:

Your reviewer, Mr. Robert Yoakum, is much taken by the book of his friend James Boyd concerning the venalities of Senator Thomas Dodd ("Alive and Well in Washington," February 10). I do not write in order to wrestle with that infatuation or even to meditate the implications of such unleavened enthusiasm for the activities of a man who thieves from his employer in order to supply the voracious mills of Mr. Drew Pearson. Permit me a word concerning Mr. Yoakum's reference to me. He says that I wrote a dozen columns but did not take up any of the major allegations of Mr. Boyd or conduct any independent research. For the record, he is wrong on both counts (see the archives). He says that I alone bought the "story about office sex." He is wrong, and could easily learn that he is wrong by talking with one or two people at one point intimately connected with Mr. Boyd. And finally, he says that I would welcome the exposure of documents stolen from a communist. As a matter of fact – which once again I could easily document – I once received such documents from a defector. I turned them over to the FBI. But then I can still distinguish between Senator Dodd and the Communist Party, and between the FBI and Drew Pearson, which gives me the edge over your star-struck reviewer and his guru.

Wm. F. Buckley, Jr.
National Review
New York, N. Y.

Military Injustice

Sirs:

In your letters column of March 23 Admiral Mitchell makes some enlightening observations, but like the author of the article on which he comments, he does not carry his analysis far enough. The admiral says that "the worst thing that can befall a guilty enlisted man" is to have other enlisted men on the court-martial which tries him. Most persons experienced in such matters would agree. Indeed, smart defense lawyers in courts-martial nearly always prefer to take their chances with an all-officer panel.

Why do enlisted members make harsh judgments? Perhaps any enlisted man selected would, given the dominance of the officer members who outnumber him and the fact that his vote alone cannot prevent a conviction or alter a sentence. But also of obvious importance is the fact that panels of courts-martial are not drawn by lot, but are appointed by the local commanding general. If enlisted members are requested, he is only too happy to comply – by appointing sergeants major, chief petty officers, master sergeants, and others who can be trusted not to behave in a manner he would consider irresponsible. These senior non-commissioned officers not only regard privates with haughty disdain based on superior economic status and years of keeping recruits in line, but also are men who have invested their working lives in a career dependent on keeping their officer bosses happy. Not surprisingly, they know

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that the best way to avoid irritation is to vote for "guilty" and the maximum sentence, and leave it to the general to exercise mercy if he is so inclined.

Telling a private or PFC – the class which makes up the overwhelming bulk of all accused – that he may appeal to the tender mercies of two or three growling thirty-year men is approximately like offering a civilian a jury of his neighbors so long as his neighbors are policemen. Whether or not Congress was well advised in 1950 when it tried to democratize military trials by adding the enlisted-member option, in practice the attempt has failed. Even when the game is played with a few wild cards, the odds still favor the side which stacks the deck.

John G. Kester
Washington, D. C.

Sirs:

I want to express my appreciation and agreement with Edward F. Sherman's timely article, *Military Injustice*, in the March 9 issue.

I was recalled to active duty in 1951 at Fort McPherson, Georgia, just at the time they started conferences to acquaint the officers with the new Uniform Code of Military Justice. While this was far above the old "Articles of War" which previously served as the basis for courts martial, even then one could see weaknesses in it. Not long after arriving on the post, I was appointed to a Special Courts Martial Board and if I recall correctly, I sat on over 80 cases during the next ten months, most of the time serving as president of the court. The only courses I even had in law were in commercial and business law, so my qualifications were somewhat nebulous.

As Mr. Sherman suggests, the real point of unfairness and concern is the power of the commander exercising courts martial jurisdiction on a post or in a given area. Some do try to give a fair trial by making certain that qualified lawyers serve on even special courts martial. Others, well, you might call it "gastronomical jurisprudence" or the decision depended on how well the general felt or had been treated at home. Another area which lacks a lot in fairness is the "Pre-trial Investigation." Often the person (officer) who makes this really has no background, and sometimes not even the common sense, to conduct such an investigation. I did one in Korea where a soldier was charged with first degree murder. Fortunately, this proved to be erroneous and the young man was cleared by the fact his act was in self-defense, but as a transportation officer, this was an awesome responsibility, making a decision in what might cost a man his life.

I also agree that there should be some type of release or provision for bail while awaiting appeal.

A. Wayne Johnson
Major, USA (Retired)
Anderson, Indiana

Kauffmann, *from page 22*

to lay strangers in order to support him. The minor characters are chosen like gems by a jeweler: Mario Cipriani as a turkey-cock thief; Umberto Bevilacqua as a Neapolitan hood whose beetle-browed, broad smile is scary; and an anonymous, runty, wide-eyed girl as the bereft wife of a man in jail, with a brood of kids who move around her wherever she walks like an animate hoop-skirt. Most of the characters, like most lower-class Italians, burst into snatches of irrelevant song as they walk or idle, even as they scheme.

Pasolini handles the pimp's discovery of love without sentimentality. There is one risky point, but he redeems it. At a café on the Tiber, when a stranger sends a waiter to pick up his girl (having assumed that she was available), Accatone assents, largely because his friends are watching. As he sees the stranger fondling her, he suddenly announces to his friends that he's going to leap from the bridge – something we have seen him do earlier to win a bet. But this time he is drunk, and his friends run after him to restrain him (*laughing* as they do so – a masterly touch). They pull him down, he runs to the water's edge, wets his face, then rubs it in the sand. For a split-second, the self-debasement seems too obvious. But the closeup of Accatone's sand-plastered face is so ugly – the ugliest such shot that I know since Charles Vanel's face went into the mud in Clouzot's *Wages of Fear* – that the moment is purified.

The music on the soundtrack is as unsatisfactory as it is in *St. Matthew*. Pasolini bastes on Bach at deliberately inappropriate moments – as during a fight between Accatone and his estranged wife's brother. The purpose, I suppose, is to assure us that in these struggling animals are souls as precious as any pictured in that music, but it seems affected. And the very end of the film seems strained. We see Accatone with his head against the curb where he has been thrown. He murmurs, "I'm all right, now," and dies. It is hard to believe his acceptance of death. A man who has lately had a bad dream of his own funeral? A defensive dramatizer of his right to exist? A man who has, for the first time, found a girl he does not want to exploit? His resignation seems Pasolini's, not his own.

But *Accatone* sticks in the mind – small, stubborn, vivid. It is credible, not pat; hard, not tough; humane, not lathered with soapy social significance. It *uses* its facts, acknowledging that the film form itself can make them real and that therefore the filmmaker has an obligation to take us inside factualness, where we can see the muscles coiling. And this, as Pasolini said, is why he makes films.

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